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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIX, Issue No. 47 | TUESDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2009 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Is the CNMI government doing enough to cut down on unnecessary spending?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

147 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Mine Rescue

Rescuers ended efforts to find more survivors at a China coal mine where at least 74 people were killed.

ASIA...Page 15

Oscar Awards

"Slumdog Millionaire" took the best-picture Academy Award and seven other Oscars on Sunday.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

Wushin increases prices of LPG products. **PAGE 2**
Mobil, Shell hike fuel prices. **PAGE 3**

Some NMC staff were improperly terminated

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Heinz Hofschneider disclosed yesterday the names of personnel who, according to him, were improperly terminated by the Northern Marianas College, resulting in the institution settling cases for thousands of dollars.

Hofschneider, in a letter to NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez on Friday, said that serious management issues threaten to undermine NMC's ability to provide education ac-

See SOME on Page 4

THE ART OF MWAR HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Two combined classes of sixth graders at San Antonio Elementary School learn the art of *mwar* making from visiting *man'amko* yesterday to kick off Cultural Week activities.

GOP sets primary between Babauta, Heinz

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Babauta

Hofschneider

The CNMI Republican Party yesterday confirmed that a primary election has been set between two gubernatorial aspirants who are seeking the party's endorsement in the November poll.

GOP chair Ed Tenorio said three aspirants have already submitted their letters of intent—former governor Juan N. Babauta, Rep. Heinz Hofschneider, and Rep. Diego Benavente, who incidentally was the first to announce his candidacy.

See GOP on Page 4

'Saipan mayor is paying 21 employees up to $31K each'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Taotao Tano Inc. yesterday disclosed that the Saipan Mayor's Office is paying 21 personnel up to $31,500 each annually.

Cruz

This is contrary to an earlier statement by Mayor Juan B. Tudela, who said that, except for one, most of his 64 personnel are being paid wages ranging from only $12,000 to $18,000 per year—an amount that enables him to keep all his full-time employees in this time of economic hardship.

Gregorio Cruz Jr., in a statement sent to *Saipan Tribune*, said that records from the mayor's office indicated that, of the

See MAYOR on Page 4

Saipan's bottled water war rages

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Stiff competition among 11 bottled water manufacturers and distributors on Saipan has driven others to sell a 5-gallon water for as low as $1.25, which was an impossible price just a few years back, but others tout safer and better tasting products.

Saipan Cool Water Mfg., which opened only in November 2008, is giving old-timers a run for their money by selling a 5-gallon water for only $1.25 to customers who buy directly from their Kannat Tabla facility, and $1.75 for water delivered to homes and offices.

"We offer a reasonable rate,

See SAIPAN'S on Page 4

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Nico Flores, sales supervisor at Saipan Ice & Water Co. Inc., inspects empty 5-gallon water bottles at the company plant in Lower Base on Saturday. Competition among 11 water manufacturers and distributors on Saipan has never been so tough, each one trying to outperform each other on quality, pricing and marketing strategy.

Local

Wushin increases prices of LPG products

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Wushin Corp. yesterday announced a 3-percent increase in the retail price of their liquefied petroleum gas and a 15 cents a gallon increase for bulk or wholesale customers effective March 2, citing price hikes in the international market and a 90 percent increase in wharfage.

This comes a few days after rival Saipan Industrial Gas Inc. announced a 10-percent hike in their LPG by March 1.

"Please understand that as much as we want to avoid raising our prices for as long as possible, we cannot afford to absorb the cost that has been brought by the…Feb. 13, 2009 price increase," Wushin said in a notice to customers.

Wushin said effective March 2, there will be a general LPG price increase of 15 cents a gallon for bulk or wholesale customers.

For retail customers, prices will increase by 3 percent. A 90-lb cylinder of LPG will increase by $3.50, from $105.50 to $109.

Customers will see a $2-increase in the price of a 50-lb cylinder of LPG, from $60 to $62.

The retail price of a 40-lb cylinder of LPG will increase by $1.50, from $50 to $51.50.

A 20-lb cylinder of LPG will soon cost $27 after a 50-cent hike.

Sung Soo Lim, managing director of Wushin Corp., yesterday said the company has always been transparent in its LPG pricing and issues realistic public notices.

"However, we can't easily predict the LPG prices since several factors influence [our] pricing especially on the island of Saipan, which differs from other places," said Lim.

These include LPG price in the international markets, shipment schedules on- and off-island, and local taxes.

"The price increase passed on to us was since Feb. 13; however, we tried to delay the release of notice of increase to ensure that they will be getting a competitive and consistent pricing. Wushin is only increasing 3 percent out of its LPG cost, and not 10 percent…," Lim said.

Wushin, he said, also tried to negotiate the price with its main supplier. Its current LPG products were purchased in January which resulted in only a slight price increase.

"Moreover, our main supplier on Guam will skip its purchase of LPG in February when prices soar high with a 32-percent increase, [and this] will favor our customers. We look forward to a stable pricing and hope that in March, the price will be stable," Lim said, adding that despite the price increase, Wushin will still be committed to providing quality service to customers.

No price hike for LPG canister

Lim said Wushin will not raise the price of its LPG canister, which is used for pre-adjusted portable gas stoves.

The price will remain at 65 cents a can, and a deposit of $1 for each new bottle (refundable upon return) and pre-adjusted gas stove with a minimum cost of $13.

"However, some of our outlet costs for pre-adjusted canister and canister refills depend on their accessibility," said Lim, adding that they have outlets at Happy Market in As Lito, Happy Market on Navy Hill, Dolphin Wholesale, Shell Highway Express, Alpex Saipan showroom, Mingming Store in Chalan Kanoa, and Kagman Market.

For inquiries, customers can call Wushin at 322-8733 or 322-7415.

By March 1, Saipan Industrial Gas Inc.'s prices will increase by 10 percent as LPG in the world market jumped by 33 percent. A 90-lb. cylinder of LPG, for example, will go up to $119 compared to the current price of $108.

GONE FISHING HAIDEE EUGENIO
Tourists board a ferry at the Outer Cove Marina to go on a fishing trip in the Saipan Lagoon.

DOI official to oversee stimulus disbursement

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Reports surfaced yesterday that President Obama would appoint Earl Devaney, the Inspector General of the Department of the Interior, to oversee the $787 billion economic stimulus plan.

Devaney, who helped amass evidence against Jack Abramoff and his dealings at the Interior, will be the chairman of the new Recovery Act Transparency and Accountability Board, according to an administration official who spoke with the Associated Press. Vice President Joe Biden will also have a role coordinating the stimulus spending.

Devaney

In 2000, Devaney testified before Congress that David North, former Public Affairs Specialist for DOI's Office of Insular Affairs, and Allen Stayman, then director of the Office of Insular Affairs, had participated in misconduct stemming from a 1998 OIA report about alleged labor and immigration abuse in the CNMI.

Steven Griles, the deputy secretary of the Interior, pleaded guilty to charges he lied during congressional testimony, based in part on Devaney's investigation related to Abramoff's ties to Indian tribes.

In 2000, Gov. Benigno Fitial, then Speaker of the House, wrote to Devaney, requesting him to investigate the hiring practices of the Federal Ombudsman's Office in the Northern Marianas.

Devaney, a former secret service agent, has been the Interior's Inspector General—or in-house auditor—since 1999.

Devaney's previous encounters with the CNMI will is a non-issue, said Charles Reyes, press secretary for the Governor's Office. Devaney is familiar with the CNMI and pointing out legal issues, all the more reason to consider him fit for the job, he said.

Suspected 'ice' supplier falls

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Police arrested a suspected supplier of methamphetamine hydrochloride or "ice" during a buy-bust operation in As Lito on Thursday.

Qingxian Xu, 46, male, Chinese, was arrested for trafficking of a controlled substance and illegal possession of a controlled substance.

In yesterday's hearing, Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman imposed a $30,000 cash bail for Xu's temporary liberty.

Detective Norman Alvin S. Rasiang stated in his report that members of the Department of Public Safety's Narcotics Units, with the assistance of members of the DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau, managed to purchase $840 worth of "ice" from Xu,

Rasiang said the officers used a "cooperating source" to negotiate the purchase of "ice" from the defendant.

Rasiang said the "cooperating source," who was given prerecorded funds in the amount of $200 by the officers, met Xu at a place in As Lito.

The detective said the $200 was arranged so that it would appear to be the full amount of $840, which was the worth of the "ice" to be bought.

Members of the team then arrested Xu after he handed the "ice" to the "cooperating source" inside a vehicle.

The officers recovered the $200 from the suspect's wallet.

Officers also seized from the car two Ziploc bags containing "ice" wrapped in aluminum foil, which were inside a white napkin.

Rasaing said the substance was tested presumptive positive for "ice."

Last Wednesday, police also arrested during a reported buy-bust operation a Chinese woman for "ice" trafficking.

Man hurt after vehicle overturns, catches fire

A man was injured when his vehicle skidded, overturned, and caught fire along Isa Drive in Papago yesterday morning.

Guohua Lu, 45, sustained a minor cut on the left arm. Medics treated him at the scene and released him.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said the road was wet at the time and Lu was cited for over-speeding.

Ogumoro said alcohol was not a factor.

She said apasserby called DPS at 8:40am about a vehicular accident near the Botanical Garden in Papago.

Ogumoro said preliminary investigation showed that Lu was driving a green 1999 Toyota 4-Runner along Isa Drive going north when the vehicle skidded.

The vehicle ran off the road, hit a big rock, and overturned. The vehicle's came to rest on its right side facing west, with its engine on fire.

Ogumoro said responding firefighters immediately extinguished the blaze.

The DPS spokesperson said the 4-Runner sustained moderate damage on both sides. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Mariana Islands Range Complex Draft EIS/OEIS Available for Public Comment Jan. 30, 2009 – March 16, 2009

On behalf of the U.S. Defense Representative Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of Palau, the U.S. Navy has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) for the Mariana Islands Range Complex. The Draft EIS/OEIS is available for public comment through March 16, 2009.

Where to get the EIS/OEIS: Visit www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com to download the document or to find a library that has a copy.

The U.S. Defense Representative Wants Your Input!

The U.S. Defense Representative is hosting open house sessions and public hearings to receive oral or written comments on the Draft EIS/OEIS.

Where to submit comments:
Submit comments via the online form at www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com or send written comments via postal mail or e-mail to:

Mariana Islands Range Complex EIS
258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100
Attn: EV2
Pearl Harbor, HI 96860-3134
E-mail: marianas.tap.eis@navy.mil

All comments must be postmarked by March 16, 2009.

Proposed Action

The U.S. Defense Representative proposes to support and conduct current, emerging and future training and research, development, test and evaluation training activities in the Mariana Islands Study Area. Three alternatives are analyzed in the Draft EIS/OEIS. Under the No Action Alternative, military activities would continue at current levels. Alternatives 1 and 2 propose increases in military activity and the number and types of training events, and enhancements to range capabilities. Alternative 2 also proposes new activities related to additional Major Exercises.

Open House Sessions & Public Hearings
Open House: 5 - 9 p.m.
Public Hearing: 7 - 9 p.m.

Guam:
February 19, 2009
Jesus & Eugenia Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building
The Anthony Leon Guerrero Multi-Purpose Room 129
University of Guam
Mangilao, Guam 96923

Guam:
February 20, 2009
Southern High School Cafeteria
#1 Jose Perez Leon Guerrero Drive
Santa Rita, Guam 96915

Saipan:
February 23, 2009
Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe

Tinian:
February 24, 2009
Tinian Elementary School Cafeteria
San Jose Village
Tinian, MP 96952

Rota:
February 26, 2009
Sinapolo Elementary School Cafeteria
Sinapolo I

For more information visit **www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com**

CNMI's possible projects total $270 million

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI government has identified $270 million worth of projects that could be eligible for funding under the $787 billion stimulus package.

The CNMI's 53 projects cover a variety of departments, including transportation, utilities and health. The most expensive projects proposed are within the Commonwealth Ports Authority for port infrastructure. A matrix was created and made available yesterday to ensure the projects are eligible for federal funding.

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed into law last week, the CNMI is eligible for infrastructure funding in addition to individual tax rebates residents will receive. But because the insular areas were unsuccessful in their attempt to allow the Interior Department to distribute their portion, the CNMI must apply and compete against other local governments for the money it receives—something local government officials are scrambling to do.

Commerce Secretary Michael Ada and acting Gov. Timothy Villagomez met with department and agency heads on Friday and discussed possible projects. A timetable was also presented where department heads are required by tomorrow to run their projects through the matrix to make sure projects are eligible. By Thursday, department heads are to begin downloading and filling out the applications. The scope of the work and request for proposals is due to Finance Secretary Eloy Inos by March 5, and by March 13 the infrastructure projects will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget.

According to the presentation, the primary goals of the ARRA include job creation and sustainability; investments into science and health; transportation; environmental protection; long-term infrastructure; and state fiscal stabilization.

The Commonwealth is treated like a state for competitive awards. For formula funds, the CNMI is treated as an "outlying area" and subject to conditions under normal federal grants. Projects where 50 percent of funds can be expended within 120 days are given preference. The governor must certify that the Commonwealth plans to use the funds and the money will create jobs and promote economic growth.

CNMI Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan has called on the Commonwealth government to work fast because of the "use it or lose it" stipulation for infrastructure projects. Last week, Sablan met with CNMI lawmakers and said the CNMI was working too slowly. Governments across the country have been scrambling to prepare the applications in order to get a chunk of the billions of dollars, including hiring people tasked specifically with completing the necessary applications, he said.

"The problem is we're not different. We're the same as all of them. We have to apply," Sablan said of the other states and territories.

Some of the proposed projects, the projected cost, and the designated local agency handling the application are:

- Improving Obyan Beach Road; $1.2 million; Division of Environmental Quality;
- Water distribution and valve replacement; $6.5 million; Commonwealth Utilities Corp.;
- Rota dialysis facility; $1.5 million; Department of Public Health;
- Purchase of fire trucks and ambulance vehicles; $7.2 million; Department of Public Safety;
- Saipan airport renovations; $35 million; Commonwealth Ports Authority;
- Professional development of Northern Marianas College staff; $260,877; NMC;

For a listing of all projects, visit www. Commerce.gov.mp.

Mobil, Shell hike fuel prices

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan motorists are now paying more for fuel after Mobil Oil Marianas and Shell Marianas raised their pump prices over the weekend by 15 cents a gallon, as oil prices hovered near $40 a barrel on Monday in Asia.

Shell increased the pump prices of its regular and premium unleaded gasoline at 6am on Friday.

Mobil Oil Marianas followed suit on Saturday at 10 a.m.

Mobil's and Shell's regular unleaded gasoline are priced the same at $2.979 a gallon for self-serve, and $3.109 a gallon for full-serve.

Mobil's super unleaded gasoline is now $3.279 a gallon (self serve), while Shell's premium unleaded gasoline is now $3.299 a gallon (self serve).

Diesel gasoline price at Mobil and Shell stations remains the same.

Saipan motorists haven't had fuel price hikes in recent months although pump prices last year hovered near $5 a gallon.

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IT&E would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on February 24th, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before February 24th.

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* You have the right to dispute this notice. You must state your claim in person or in writing no later than February 24th. You must pay any amount not in dispute to avoid disconnection. Payment denotes acceptance of all charges.

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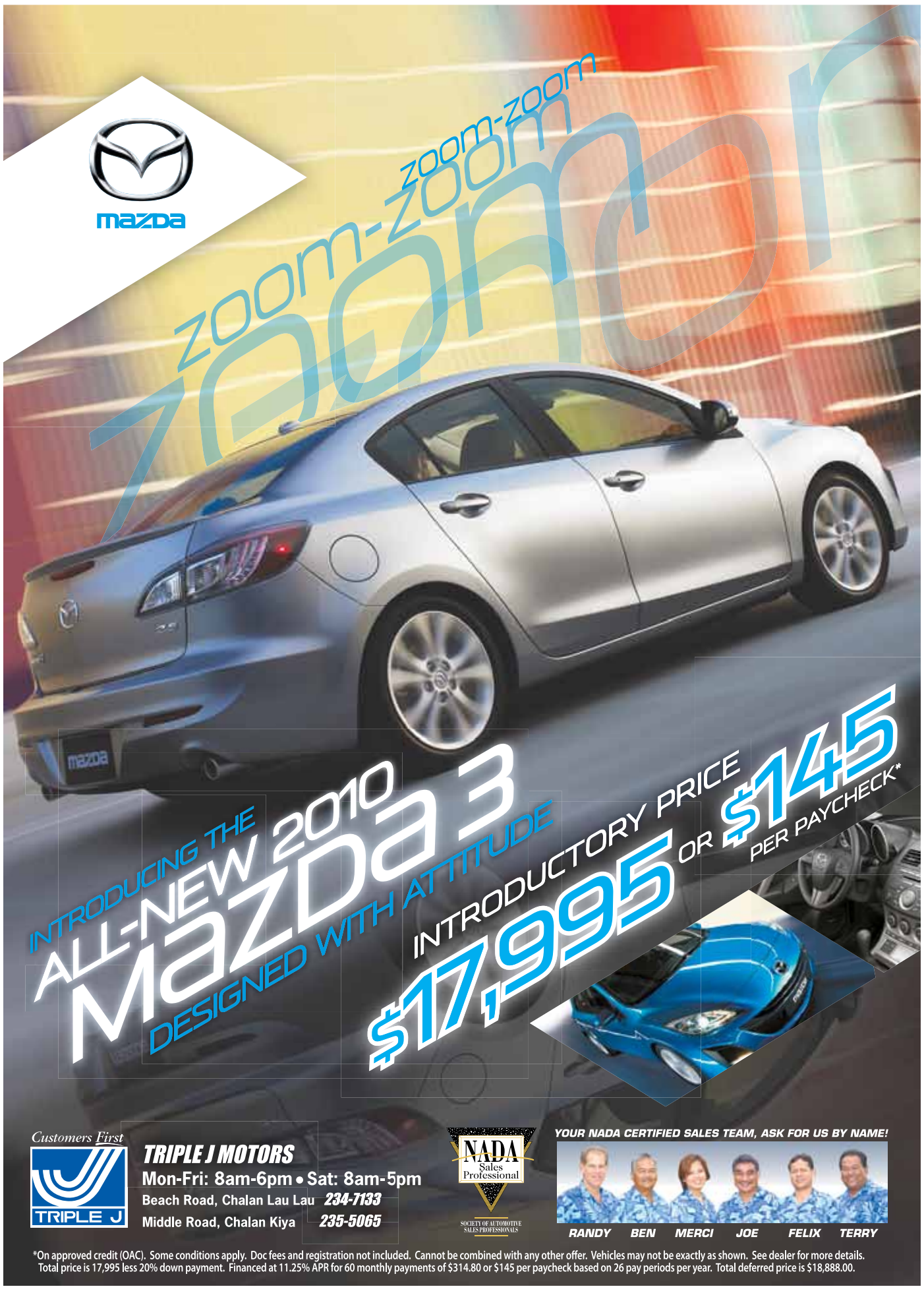
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GOP

From Page 1

There have been reports, though, that Benavente intends to back out of the race and wants to withdraw his letter of intent from the party. Benavente neither confirmed nor denied these reports yesterday.

Reluctant to admit that the number of gubernatorial aspirants may go down to just two, Tenorio said the party wants all aspirants—for governor, lieutenant governor, senators, congressman, and mayor—to submit their intention by March 20.

"The primary election is temporarily set for the latter part of June or early July. We have set March 20 as the deadline for all candidates wanting to run under the GOP banner," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Saipan Tribune learned that Benavente has yet to identify his running mate for the general election, while Babauta is seeking the party's endorsement with current Education Board member Galvin Deleon Guerrero as running mate. Hofschneider, meanwhile, picked House Speaker Arnold Palacios as his running mate.

Tenorio, when asked about the party's expectations this general election, said the GOP hopes to field strong candidates.

"As soon as they all comply with their letters of intent, that's when we will set up more meetings and preparations for the campaign. There's a need to put the team together this time," he said.

In the last election, Hofschneider ended up running as an independent candidate after Babauta successfully won the party's endorsement. There was no primary conducted between the two aspirants.

However, the two were defeated by Fitial in a four-way race in 2005.

'Committee wants Diego to support, align with JNB'

Edward Guerrero, chairman of the committee to elect Juan Babauta and Galvin Deleon Guerrero, said yesterday that if Benavente backs out from the race, he hopes the former lieutenant governor will support the Babauta-Deleon Guerrero tandem.

Guerrero is confident that Babauta will be the victor in the GOP primary.

"I am very confident of that…because we're working very hard and we're hoping the outcome will be favorable for their tandem," Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

The committee chairman said that since Babauta-Deleon Guerrero already complied with all the requirements set by GOP, "we're just awaiting final word as to the final date of the primary."

Guerrero said the information about Benavente's possible withdrawal from the race is considered "favorable" to Babauta's group because Republican votes will be split between just two candidates—Babauta and Hofschneider.

"We're hoping that if he [Diego] backs out, he will support our group and align himself and his candidates with us," Guerrero said.

Like GOP chair Ed Tenorio, Guerrero is confident that the party will be fielding a strong slate in the November election.

SAIPAN'S

From Page 1

given the state of our economy," Larry Deleon Guerrero, manager of Saipan Cool Water, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Despite being the lowest priced, he said that Saipan Cool Water's products are clean and safe. Deliveries, he added, are also very consistent.

"Our water tastes good, and is safe to drink. We get our water from a water well, and not from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. We are checked periodically by the Division of Environmental Quality and a private lab tests our water regularly," Deleon Guerrero said.

Nico Flores, sales supervisor at Saipan Ice & Water Co. Inc., said they are the only water manufacturer that has an in-house chemist to regularly check the safety and quality of their products.

"This means the water delivered to customers are safe to drink," Flores said in an interview at their Lower Base plant on Saturday. He added that their products, facility and detergent are approved by DEQ, the Bureau of Environmental Health and/or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Saipan Ice & Water, which carries the name "Sparkle Clean" on its labels, is the first and biggest water manufacturer on Saipan in 25 years. It offers regular water and fluorinated water, which can be distinguished by their green caps. He said their automatic bottling machine cleans, refills and caps 720 five-gallon water an hour.

"We have the cleanest and safest water because of the way we process our product," Flores said, adding that they have multiple sources of water: deep well, rainwater and CUC.

Lito Dizon, also a sales supervisor at Saipan Ice & Water, urged consumers not to be easily lured by lower priced bottled water. Saipan Ice & Water delivers 5-gallon water for $2.50.

"Be wise," he said. "Try to visit their facility to see how their water is manufactured."

Random checks

John Tagabuel, director of the Bureau of Environmental Health, said all water manufacturers undergo random checks and regular inspection upon renewal of the yearly sanitation permit.

"To date, all the water distributors are in compliance with BEH sanitary standards. All are required to meet minimum sanitary requirements and conditions prior to being granted sanitary permit," he told Saipan Tribune.

He said the 11 water manufacturers are: Diamond Water & Ice; JG Sablan Water Co.; Marianas Ice and Water; Mountain Fresh Water; PI's Ice & Water; Saipan Cool Water; Saipan Ice & Water; Star Marianas Water; Swip Water; The Water Company; and Twinkle Brite Water.

Swip Water, also one of the newest water manufacturers on Saipan, has the lowest price for a 5-gallon water delivered to houses and offices at $1.50.

Customers who buy from Swip Water's facility in Sadog Tasi pay only $1.50 for every 5 gallons of water.

Marianas Ice & Water in Papago delivers 5-gallon water for $2 to $2.50, depending on the location of the customer. Customers who buy directly from the facility are charged $1.50, according to the office yesterday.

The Water Company, which carries the "Crystal Pure" brand, delivers 5-gallon water for $2. It boasts of a quality product and on-time delivery.

"Our water has a different taste because we don't use deep well water which, over time, becomes contaminated. Our product is a combination of CUC water and rainwater so it's better tasting and tastes fresh," Emri R. Villanueva, sales manager of The Water Company, said in an interview at their Lower Base facility on Saturday.

Eli Mindanao, supervisor at JG Sablan Ice & Water, yesterday said their water product tastes better than others because they get water from a deep well in Gualo Rai, and does not rely on CUC water.

"CUC water is salty. Others also tell us that our water sometimes tastes like coconut and it tastes good," he said.

JG Sablan Ice & Water delivers 5-gallon water for $1.50 to $2.50, depending on the location of the customer. Customer who buy directly from JG Sablan Ice & Water's facility in Garapan are charged $1.75 per 5 gallons.

"Others sell water for a lower price. But even with the economy, customers should consider the taste of the water. Is it safe? Our product is tried and tested," he said, adding that JG Sablan Ice & Water has been operating since 1990.

Ronnie Bunao, supervisor at Star Marianas Water, yesterday boasted of their water quality and on-time delivery. The company treats and purifies seawater using a high-caliber reverse osmosis system.

"As of now, we don' have price control here. Others offer much lower prices. Customers should know that even if we have a higher price, the quality of our water is better. And how can others lower their price if we have the same costs? Cheaper isn't necessarily better," he said.

Star Marianas delivers 5-gallon water for $2. Customers only pay $1.50 if they buy directly from the Star Marianas facility along Beach Road in Garapan. "We are so accessible," Bunao added.

The Bureau of Environmental Health, according to Tagabuel, recently cited a water manufacturer after a BEH sanitary inspector found an employee washing bottles in an unapproved wash bottle basin.

"The establishment was cited and had subsequently rectified the violation," he said.

In his opinion, competition drives the cost of products down. This, he said, is good for consumers who have a wider choice.

MAYOR

From Page 1

21 highly-paid personnel, majority are the mayor's relatives. He provided the *Saipan Tribune* a copy of the personnel records.

He said there are six administrative assistants who are receiving $19,000 to $20,000 per annum; eight executive assistants being paid $20,572 to $25,155; and six executive assistants who are getting from $30,000 to $31,500 every year.

"These 21 employees are close family members [of the mayor]," Cruz said in his statement, adding that three of the 21 [administrative executives] are grandchildren of the mayor.

Their compensation ranges from $16,000 to $25,000, according to the personnel records.

Mayor's response

When contacted by *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, Tudela declined to comment, saying he cannot discuss personnel matters in public. He assured, though, that his office abides by all provisions of CNMI law.

"Personnel issues are something we don't want discuss publicly. We have to protect the welfare of our personnel," he said.

The mayor earlier said that due to the severe condition of government revenues and collection, a reduction in work hours is being mulled for all his employees.

The move aims to keep the office's personnel instead of terminating their contracts, which the mayor deems would create more damage and impact on the community in the long run.

Tudela is serving his last term in office as mayor of Saipan. He plans to retire after his two four-year terms in office.

Ghost employees

A more serious allegation of employing "ghost personnel" was also raised by the Taotao Tano leader against the mayor.

Cruz said the mayor's grandson, assigned to the Division of Youth Services, is being paid under the mayor's personnel funds for the past six years. His position, Cruz added, is actually that of a community worker under the Saipan Mayor's Office.

The Taotao Tano leader also scored what he described as the mayor's "excessive preferential personnel benefits, unjustified salary payments, and traveling expenses."

Based on the projected personnel cost breakdown through Sept. 30, the mayor's office will incur a personnel cost of $1.186 million.

"There is a serious need for the public auditor and the Attorney General's Office to investigate gross negligence, mismanagement and abuse of public funds by the mayor's office," Cruz added.

He said that to date, Tudela's office has yet to produce a single audit report or financial statement on all Liberation funds spent in past years.

Every year, the Legislature appropriates funds for the Liberation Day festivities, considered the biggest community event on island.

SOME

From Page 1

cording to the guidelines provided by a formal accreditation process.

Although these issues stem from several years ago, he said it does not appear that the college administrators are making any headway to eliminate the problems.

Instead, Hofschneider said, new problems are cropping up, adding to the uncertainty of whether full accreditation will be granted any time soon.

The lawmaker disclosed that the college improperly terminated or forced to resign seven employees, resulting in expensive settlements. The list includes Danny Wyatt, former acting president and dean of Academic Programs and Services; Patricia Taylor, former nursing instructor; Bernie Sablan, former bookstore manager; Daisy Villagomez-Bier, former dean of student services; Dr. Elena Alexandrova, former science instructor; Sachiko Adachi, adjunct Japanese instructor; and Robert Churney, former Office of Institutional Effectiveness director.

Besides these individuals, Hofschneider said five others were found improperly hired by the NMC management in a clear violation of CNMI law and board policies.

Persons who were hired under unbudgeted limited term appointments were John Quitugua of the IT department, Octavius Palacios, OIE; David John Apatang, bookstore; David P. Apatang, bookstore; and former chief financial officer Marylou S. Ada. The first four hires were either sons or brothers of lawmakers.

Hofschneder, in his letter to Fernandez, pointed out that these limited term appointees were converted to full-time employees without going through proper procedures such as vacancy announcement, certification of qualifications, and employment interviews.

The lawmaker added that five others were hired based on personal political agenda and were not the most qualified applicants as determined by the interview committees. He identified them as Tee Abraham, dean of COMPASS; Janice Tenorio, director of SSS; Roger Madriaga, CFAO; Marian Tudela, director of Upward Bound; and David John Apatang, bookstore manager.

Reckless spending

The lawmaker said that reckless spending at NMC has resulted in a projected $800,000 deficit in Fiscal Year 2009, as presented during last week's academic council meeting on campus.

Hofschneider said these included the plan of NMC to sponsor college-wide workshops with lunch provided at Saipan World Resort; excessive wining and dining; costly cash settlements as a result of failure to follow human resources policies; hiring unbudgeted limited term appointees; hiring a local firm to conduct background checks on applicants; excessive and frequent travels; more than $10,000 paid to a management team member for per diem; and travels and consultancy contract with Key Trio.

NMC could do more

Despite funding limitations, Hofschneider admitted that NMC functioned quite well and tried to hire dedicated and competent faculty to provide a solid foundation for further education.

"There are many in the community who believe that NMC could do more. Still, there is general agreement that it did satisfy its basic mandate," Hofschneider told Fernandez.

Generally, the lawmaker said that NMC is free to direct its own affairs, and this is as it should be.

"However, the government provides funding for the college operations, and the community has made an investment in its operations and this gives members of the Legislature an interest in making sure that students and the community are well-served by college administrators and adequately protected by sound governing policies," Hofschneider added.

The lawmaker is expecting a response from the president. *Saipan Tribune* tried several times to obtain a response from Fernandez but she has yet to give a statement as of press time.

'I succeeded as AG, was not appointed'

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gregory Baka says he stands by his position as acting attorney general despite never being confirmed by the Senate.

The House of Representatives has said Baka is violating the law by holding the position, and the Legislature continues to look into the legality of Baka's position. Baka, who was promoted to deputy attorney general in July 2006, succeeded to the role of acting AG after Matthew T. Gregory resigned in September. By law, the governor must appoint a nominee within 30 days of a vacancy and the Senate must then confirm the nomination. But Baka said he was not nominated, instead he succeeded Gregory, although he has earlier been quoted as saying he will do what the Senate wants.

But, Baka said yesterday, he was not appointed but merely succeeded.

"Under the relevant statutes, whether or not an acting department head needs to be confirmed depends on whether the individual was 'appointed' to the position, as opposed to having 'succeeded' to office," he said in an e-mail.

His salary remains that of the deputy attorney general, his contractual position, he noted.

Baka referred to Superior Court case Demapan v. Kara, which centered on the continued re-appointment of Maya Kara as acting attorney general, despite the Senate's rejection of her nomination. There are additional factors, he added, although he did not specify.

In Demapan v. Kara, the court ruled that there is no statutorily created position of acting attorney general. The governor is required to appoint an attorney general, the court said.

"There is no reference to an Acting Attorney General appointment, nor does this provision give the Governor authority to make such an acting appointment. Moreover, 1 CMC § 8245 provides for the annual base salary of the Attorney General at $70,000. There is no reference in § 8245 as to the salary of an Acting Attorney General," the case stated.

Kara was receiving the $70,000 salary of an attorney general.

The court said statutes of the CNMI allow the governor to make appointments to the Office of the Attorney General only when there is a vacancy in the position. Baka and press secretary Charles Reyes have said there was no vacancy because, as deputy, Baka automatically succeeded the previous AG. Baka has used the title of acting attorney general on official court documents.

Baka said he, Gov. Benigno Fitial and Senate President Pete Reyes—who has said he would use his influence to make sure Baka was not confirmed—"would welcome the identification of a suitable individual who is qualified, willing, and able to accept an appointment to serve as Attorney General and lead the OAG in its ongoing service as the people's lawyers."

Trial begins in NMI's third biggest 'ice' haul

The jury trial of a former garment worker who reportedly yielded the third largest haul so far of methamphetamine hydrochloride or "ice" in the CNMI began yesterday in federal court.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson presided over the jury trial of Yong Ming Song, who is facing a charge of possession of a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of a school with intent to distribute.

Yesterday afternoon, assistant U.S. attorney James Benedetto called to the witness stand Police Sergeant Anthony Macaranas, who narrated to the court the circumstances that led to the arrest of Song on the night of Sept. 11, 2008.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, it was Sgt. Macaranas and Police Officer Daniel Punimata who recovered the drug haul during a random check on Song, whom they flagged down for allegedly not wearing a seatbelt.

Munson

During cross-examination by defense counsel Joey San Nicolas, Macaranas admitted that prior to the arrest of Song, there was an operation at that time being conducted by the DEA.

Macaranas also admitted that Punimata, who was a DEA Task Force member, was in his police's car at that time.

The police sergeant said that Song's car was tinted and that it was Punimata who later saw the bag that contained the "ice" in the defendant's vehicle.

Macaranas said they first made contact with Song's vehicle along Chalan Monsignor Guerrero.

"We don't know who he [Song] was," Macaranas replied, when asked whether he knew the defendant was in the car at that time.

As to San Nicolas's question whether at the time he suspected that the person in that car was carrying "ice," the police officer replied, "Yes."

When Saipan Tribune left the courtroom yesterday afternoon, Benedetto was still questioning Macaranas.

A DEA special agent stated in his report that on Sept. 11, 2008, at 10:40pm, Macaranas and Punimata were cruising along Beach Road in San Jose aboard a patrol car when they saw a white Toyota Corolla driving south.

The two officers noticed that the driver, later identified as Song, was not wearing a seatbelt. As the car entered the Susupe area, Macaranas activated the police car's emergency lights and stopped the vehicle.

Song was reportedly sweating and his hands were shaking.

The indictment indicated that 138 grams of "ice" were seized from Song's vehicle. The defendant pleaded not guilty. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Torres files complaint against son of late chief justice Taylor

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Stanley T. Torres filed a police complaint on Thursday against the son of the late chief justice Marty Taylor for allegedly threatening him.

In a police report obtained by the *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, police classified the nature of the offense as assault and disturbing the peace.

Torres identified the suspect as Jeffery Randall Taylor, said to be part owner of the Pure Bred Trench Tech on Saipan.

As of yesterday, Taylor has yet to be arrested.

According to the police report, the long-time Saipan lawmaker called DPS on Thursday at 1:01pm to report that Taylor confronted him and threatened to hurt him.

A police officer said Torres stated that at 12:15pm that day he was at Quik Print in Garapan when he came across Taylor.

Taylor followed Torres to the parking lot, where the suspect confronted him, saying, "You look at these eyes! You look at these eyes, and remember this face!"

Taylor was allegedly about two feet in front of the congressman when he said this.

The suspect also allegedly threatened Torres not to show up at his father's funeral.

"Don't you ever show up at my father's funeral because if you do, I will f__k you up!" Taylor allegedly told the 67-year-old Torres.

The lawmaker responded that it was his prerogative. Torres then walked away. Torres said that Taylor followed him and kept repeating that he would "f__k him up."

Taylor also allegedly said: "And that law that you introduced, you better stop because you're f___g up my business!"

Torres told police that his prior relationship with the retired late chief justice possibly caused the confrontation. He believes his recent introduction of a law that aims to regulate mixed martial art on Saipan was another reason.

Torres had described the sport of mixed martial arts as "too brutal and very violent."

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10 dancers of defunct Club Jama file lawsuit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Ten dancers of the defunct Club Jama filed yesterday a lawsuit in federal court against their former employers for allegedly failing to pay their overtime compensation.

The complaints are Aileen C. Alanan, Gerlie Albuna, April G. Alfonso, Jenny Solomon, Aiza Y. Garcia, Doricel Lemorinas, Mary Grace Manguiob, Raquel A. Ramos, Reah Carascal Rodriguez, and Merarcy P. Templado.

The plaintiffs sued Chanpac Inc., owner of the former Club Jama, and Chanpac officers Ernest J. Strange and his wife, Thelma Strange, for breach of contract.

The Strange couple reportedly currently reside in Tennessee.

The plaintiffs, through counsel Colin M. Thompson, asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to order the Stranges to pay the ex-dancers' overtime compensation, damages, attorney's fees, and court costs.

Thompson stated in the complaint that his clients, as dancers at Club Jama in Susupe, were required to wear certain clothing as uniform while working at Club Jama.

The defendants, the lawyer said, deducted the cost of the uniforms from the dancers' wages without the consent of the employees.

"As part of their duties as dancers for Club Jama, plaintiffs were to encourage customers to order and consume 'ladies drinks.' If a plaintiff did not make their quota of ladies drink, defendants forced them to work on their days off until they made quota," Thompson said.

He alleged that the defendants forced the dancers to dance for events and functions outside and in addition to their normal hours of work at the club.

The defendants, Thompson said, also forced the dancers to attend involuntary training sessions outside of and in addition to their normal hours of work at Club Jama.

"At times, plaintiffs were confined to their barracks. When plaintiffs had free time, the plaintiffs' free time was severely restricted," he said.

Thompson said the defendants violated the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act by failing to pay the plaintiffs overtime compensation.

He said the defendants also failed to maintain full and accurate records of the hours actually worked by plaintiffs as required by FLSA.

In December 2007, police and Labor investigators raided the barracks of Club Jama in Chalan Piao and rescued six dancers who were allegedly being falsely imprisoned.

But seven then employees of Club Jama, including a dancer, later denied the allegations by their co-workers that they were being imprisoned in their barracks.

As of yesterday, the Strange couple have not been charged in court.

ISLAND BEAT

Inatuas cultural dancers showcase traditional island dances at the Garapan Street Market, which remains one of the busiest places for tourists and residents every Thursday night.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Arelin G. Mareham
P.O. Box 7471 SVRB
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No. 234-3464

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE MATTER OF THE PETITION TO APPOINT GENERAL GUARDIANSHIP FOR: JYRA MAE R. GUTIJER Minor Child by ARELIN G. MAREHAM and ISABEL G. MAREHAM Petitioners.	) FCD GU) CIVIL ACTION) NO. 09-0043))) **NOTICE OF**) **HEARING**))))

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Appointment of Guardianship for the above-named minor children by Arelin G. Mareham and Isabel G. Mareham Petitioner, was filed with the above-entitled Honorable Court and is open for review at the office of the Clerk of the said Court in Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A HEARING of said petition for Guardianship will be held at the above-entitled Honorable Court at Guma Hustisia Building, Susupe, Saipan, NMI, before the Honorable Kenneth Govendo on the 10th day of March, 2009 at 1:30 P.M. or as soon as thereafter.

Bernadita A. Sablan Clerk of Court
/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

ELEVENTH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Eleventh CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Special Board Meeting on Wednesday, February 25, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. at the BOE Conference Room, 2nd Floor, NMI Retirement Fund Bldg., Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda

II. Public Comments

III. Reports
- a. Chair
  - i. Report on San Francisco Head Start Training

IV. Old Business

V. New Business
- a. Head Start Emergency Health and Safety Grant Application

VI. Executive Session
- a. Legal Updates
- b. Personnel
- c. Other matters

VII. Miscellaneous Matters

VIII. Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting

IX. Adjournment

[1] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

DENTAL CORNER

'Mommy? Can I have a snack?'

By TWYLA SEATON, RDH, BS
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: Twyla Seaton is a dental hygienist at the Saipan Seventh Day Adventist Clinic.

Many people do not realize that there is any correlation between snacking and tooth health. Research has shown that snacking can significantly increase the risk for tooth decay especially foods that are high in sugar content and starch. Children are a lot of times more susceptible to tooth decay than adults because they do not have adequate home care, so snacking increases their risk even more.

There are foods/drinks that are more likely to cause to tooth decay and they are:

- Candies
- White bread (due to its sticky texture, it sticks to the teeth more readily)
- Sports drinks
- Fruit juices
- Soda pop

When these foods/drinks are eaten between meals, they are more likely to cause tooth decay. When we eat and drink, our saliva is activated to help digest the food or drink. The saliva is acidic and remains in this state until 20 minutes after eating/drinking. After this time period, the saliva returns to a non-acidic state. During the 20 minute acidic state, the teeth are more susceptible to cavities. This is the reason why it is so important not to eat or drink between meals. The only liquid that we should drink between meals is water. Fruit juices, soda pop, and the like should only be drunk during meals so as not to keep the mouth in an acidic state.

There are foods that are extremely good for our teeth and they are as follows:

- Vegetables (i.e. lettuce, broccoli, tomatoes, carrots, bitter melon, eggplant, green beans, okra, squash, pumpkin, etc)
- Fruits (i.e. apples, bananas, pineapple, breadfruit, papaya, mango, etc)
- Wheat/multi-grain bread
- Legumes (i.e. lentils, kidney beans, navy beans, black beans, etc)
- Brown rice

These are all healthy foods that not only make our teeth stronger, but our bodies healthier as well. How about giving our kids something to smile about and give them foods that make their teeth healthy and strong?

Mental Health Planning Council
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Quarterly Meeting

February 25, 2009
Pacific Islands Club, Magellan - Annex Room
9:00 a.m.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

II. Old Business
- A. Committees Discussion
- B. Council/Coalition Projects/Report
- C. Rota Report
- D. Tinian Report
- E. TLC Update
- F. Clubhouse Update

III. New Business
- A. CGC New Policy
- B.

IV. Miscellaneous/Announcements

V. Next Meeting - Next Years Meeting Dates

Vi. Adjournment

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

NOTICE OF SALE
UNDER POWER OF SALE
IN DEED OF TRUST

Anthony P. Sonoda and Lorraine Anne C. Sonoda now known as Lorraine Anne T. Cabrera, (collectively "Trustor"), on or about March 11, 2002 gave and delivered to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, formerly known as the Mariana Island Housing Authority ("Trustee"), acting on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs, United States of America, ("VA"), a Deed of Trust upon certain real property hereinafter described, which Deed of Trust was recorded on March 11, 2002 under Document No. 02-585 to secure payment of a Promissory Note of the Trustor to the Trustee, acting on behalf of the VA.

The Deed of Trust and this Notice of Sale affect the property hereafter described:

LOT NO. 019 I 30, CONTAINING AN AREA OF 948 SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS, AS MORE PARTICULARLY SHOWN ON THE SURVEY PLAT OF SUBDIVISION OF LOT 019 I 04, DLS CHECK NO. 019 I 02, THE ORIGINAL OF WHICH WAS FILED WITH THE COMMONWEALTH RECORDER'S OFFICE, AS FILE NO. 91-2320, ON MAY 13, 1991.

The Trustor has defaulted on payment of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust, and by reason of said default Trustee issued its Notice of Default on January 21, 2009. Thirty days have passed since the default notice was served on Trustor and said default has not been cured.

Pursuant to 2CMC §4622(b)(2), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, Trustee will, on **Tuesday, March 24, 2009 at 10:00 a.m., at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation's office in Garapan, Saipan** under power of sale contained in the Deed of Trust, sell the above described parcel of real property at public auction to the highest qualified bidder, to satisfy the obligations secured by said Deed of Trust. The minimum bid offer shall be not less than **One Hundred Thousand, Nine Hundred Eighteen and 04/100 ($100,918.04)**, the total amount due under the VA loan plus Trustee's expenses.

A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within 72 hours of the auction sale. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within 72 hours will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will revert to NMHC. The sale shall be without warranty as to the title or interest to be conveyed or as to the property of the Deed of Trust, other than that the Trustee is the lawful holder of such Deed of Trust. The purchase price shall be payable by cash, certified check or cashier's check.

Trustee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to cancel or extend the date, time and place for sale of such property. Any prospective buyer must be a person authorized by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to hold title to real property in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

DATED this 23rd day of February, 2009.

/s/ Joshua T. Sasamoto
Corporate Director, NMHC

"NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity, lender, and employer"

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB09-CRM-049

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: MARCH 12, 2009 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE RENTAL FOR THE COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT - TINIAN BRANCH"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

THE LESSOR MUST COMPLY WITH CNMI PUBLIC LAW 15-23, ARTICLE 5, SECTION 8652 (A) - (D)

/s/ **JOHN B. JOYNER, PH.D**
DIRECTOR OF CRM

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB09-CRM-050

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: MARCH 12, 2009 • TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE RENTAL FOR THE COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT - ROTA BRANCH"

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PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

THE LESSOR MUST COMPLY WITH CNMI PUBLIC LAW 15-23, ARTICLE 5, SECTION 8652 (A) - (D)

/s/ **JOHN B. JOYNER, PH.D**
DIRECTOR OF CRM

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

SAES students learn cultural appreciation

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The weeklong celebration of cultures at San Antonio Elementary School kicked off yesterday with the islands' senior citizens sharing their skills in mwar and bead making and performances of traditional songs and dances to over 300 children on campus.

Ronnie Aguon, program coordinator, said the event's prime objective is to "revive and survive" the indigenous languages and cultures among public school students.

"By doing so, we're putting back the respect to local traditions," he told Saipan Tribune.

Aguon, who is also a teacher of language heritage studies, admitted that only a few students use the Chamorro and Carolinian languages nowadays.

Under the school system's curriculum, each grade level from first to eight grades must receive 45 minutes of daily instruction about the local dialects.

Aguon said this initiative must be complemented with more activities and programs in school that would encourage students to continue their lessons in the heritage studies curriculum.

Yesterday, 18 man'amko were seen providing sessions to each classrooms dealing with story telling, singing, dancing, weaving, bead making, and mwar making.

Representatives of the Historic Preservation Office were also seen teaching kids about local history and artifacts.

Aguon, elated at the enthusiasm shown by the students, said that more cultural programs should be held at the campus.

This week a cultural exchange with a Japanese school is also slated in San Antonio school.

"Since we're celebrating culture appreciation week on campus, we decided this event to coincide with our cultural exchange with our Japanese counterparts," he said, adding a special ceremony is being planned for the coming of foreign students.

According to sixth grader Vincent Paul Santos, cultural presentations and demonstrations on campus are among the "exciting" moments during cultural week celebration.

It is only through the event, he said, that students are able to meet and interact with "experts" on local traditions and languages.

The mwar-making, he added, highlights the important role the man'amko play in passing on the island's tradition.

Mwars are used to welcome guests and dignitaries during island occasions.

For Jason Corilla, he believes the 45-minute session during heritage studies must also incorporate activities that would better enhance and encourage the students' interest in knowing more about the local languages.

"I think we need more activities like this…because it's fun and interesting," he told Saipan Tribune.

Aguon disclosed that San Antonio is home to not just islanders and local students but various ethnicities like Chinese, Koreans, Bangladeshis, Filipinos, and FSM citizens.

Besides the man'amko and HPO staffers, individual parents were also seen providing sessions yesterday.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Veterans' briefing and stress management briefing

This is to let all combat veterans, their dependents and all concerned know that on Feb. 26-27, 2009, Catherine Illarmo, the Department of Veterans Affairs team leader/LCSW from the Guam Vet Center will be on Saipan to give individuals counseling to combat veterans and a stress management briefing to all interested. Anyone wishing to see Illarmo may call her at 1-671-472-7161 or Ruth Coleman at the Veterans Affairs Office at 664-2650 to make an appointment. She will also take walk-ins.

- Feb. 26, 2009, 9am-4pm, Military/ Veterans Office, Bldg 1364, Capital Hill
- Feb. 27, 2009 9am-12pm, same place
- Feb. 26, 2009, 6pm, Army Reserve Center

For more information, call Ruth Coleman at the Office of Military/ Veterans Affairs at 664-2650. ***(PR)***

Puengin Inetnon seeks vendors, entertainers

Entertainers and produce vendors are needed for Puengin Inetnon, Kagman's Friday Night Markets. Puengin Inetnon is held every government payday at the Kagman Community Center parking lot from 4:30pm to 10pm. Interested vendors and entertainers may call the Kagman Post Office at 256-POST. ***(PR)***

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT

CNMI Public School System, Special Education & Early Intervention Program

Pursuant to Part B & Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Public School System Special Education & Early Intervention Program is required to provide a 60 day circulation notice of its Part B & Part C Grant Application and a 30 day comment period from the general public, including individuals with disabilities and parents of special education children & infants and toddlers with disabilities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

- Part B (Special Education) Public Circulation Period: February 26, 2009 thru April 26, 2009
- Public Comment Period: March 20, 2009 thru April 18, 2009

Public Hearings:

Saipan:	March 31,2009	6:30 to 8:00 pm (Location to be Announced)
Tinian:	April 01, 2009	6:30 to 8:00 pm (Location to be Announced)
Rota:	April 02, 2009	6:30 to 8:00 pm (Location to be Announced)

Due to the December 1, 2008 supplemental changes in the IDEA Regulations specific to §300.300 to 311 and §300.500 to 536, changes were made to the PSS Policy & Procedural Manual and Parent's Rights. Public Hearings will be conducted to gather public comments regarding the changes prior to submission to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) the Part B Grant Application due May 11, 2009 and the Part C Grant Application due May 18, 2009.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

- Part C (Early Intervention) Public Circulation Period: March 1, 2009 thru April 30, 2009
- Public Comment Period: March 16, 2009 thru April 30, 2009

There are no anticipated changes to the Part C Policies and Procedures.

Copies of the Grant Application, Policy and Procedure Manual and Parent's Rights Booklet are available from Monday – Friday, 8am - 4pm at the Office of Special Education Program located on the 2nd floor of the Retirement Bldg., Capitol Hill or the Children's Developmental Assistance Center in Garapan. Comments may be submitted by fax to (670) 664-3774, or hand delivered to the Office of Special Education Program located on the 2nd floor of the Retirement Bldg., Capitol Hill, or the Children's Developmental Assistance Center in Garapan or phone in your comments to:

Office of Special Education Program – 237-3029
Children's Developmental Assistance (C*DAC) – 664-4830

You can also access the documents on the PSS Web-Site at:
Part B: http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/PSSCentralOffice/index.cfm?pageID=75
Part C: http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/PSSCentralOffice/index.cfm?pageID=91

For more information, please contact Ms. Suzanne W. Lizama-Program Coordinator at (670) 237-3029.

USCG search for missing Chuuk boys

HAGATNA, Guam—U.S. Coast Guard crews aboard a C-130 long range search aircraft will continue to scour a small area of ocean approximately 270 nautical miles west of Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia for two young boys missing for nearly seven days.

The boys were reported missing to the Coast Guard at 4:40pm Guam Standard Time, Wednesday, Feb. 18. The boys were last seen on Sunday, Feb. 15, while paddling an outrigger canoe between islands 150 nautical miles west of Chuuk in the FSM.

Coast Guard Sector Guam is coordinating the search from its 24-hour Rescue Sub Center, with help from search and rescue controllers at the Joint Rescue Command Center in Honolulu. The C-130 aircraft and crew are based at Air Station Barbers Point on Oahu.

The 18-person crew aboard the Coast Guard patrol boat *Washington*, based out of Guam, is expected to arrive in the search area tomorrow evening. This will be a transit of more than 400 nautical miles.

At dusk Friday, the crew aboard the C-130 spotted the boys in a location 128 nautical miles west of their starting point.

The C-130 crew was able to drop a survival kit containing a radio, food, water and signaling devices but had to depart the scene and return to Guam because they were running low on fuel. The C-130 crew reported the boys were able to recover the survival kit.

After the C-130 crew reported the boys' position, Coast Guard search and rescue controllers in Guam diverted a Good Samaritan vessel, the 820-foot bulk carrier *Brilliant Century* to the scene. Once there, the crew of the vessel found the canoe with one boy in the water swimming.

The *Brilliant Century*'s crew tossed a life ring to the boy in the water, but heavy seas and current prevented the boy from reaching it. In the dark, the ship's crew later found the canoe without the boys, but filled with water and a strobe light from the survival kit dropped by the C-130's crew.

A crew aboard a U.S. Navy *P-3 Orion* long-range aircraft from Kadena Air Base in Japan was diverted and arrived on scene later to continue the search effort, along with the crew of another Good Samaritan vessel, the *Sanqua*.

The weather last night was reported by rescuers to be rough with strong currents. Winds were out of the east at 15 knots, with gusts of 20 knots and seas of 8 feet.

"This is a very remote area with no search and rescue resources nearby," said Capt. David Swatland, Chief of Response for the Fourteenth Coast Guard District in Honolulu, and the senior operations officer for U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue assets in the Central Pacific.

"While Coast Guard and Navy fixed wing aircraft were successful in locating the canoe, darkness and weather conditions have prevented anyone from actually rescuing the two boys. We will continue searching today and look forward to having cutter *Washington* on scene tomorrow evening."

The U.S. Coast Guard reminds mariners in the Marianas and Caroline Islands to immediately report overdue mariners to the 24-hour Rescue Sub Center in Guam, at 671-564-USCG or via VHF marine band channel 16. ***(USCG)***

Hawaii is latest in civil unions battleground

HONOLULU (AP)—Hawaii, the state that adopted the nation's first "defense of marriage" constitutional amendment a decade ago, has now become the latest battleground in the fight for same-sex civil unions.

It would become the fifth state to legalize the alternative to gay marriage if the Democrat-dominated Legislature and Republican governor approve a civil union law. The measure was passed by the state House this month but it now faces the Senate, where a divided committee is to vote Tuesday.

Republican Gov. Linda Lingle has declined to comment on the issue and it's unclear whether she would veto the bill.

Gay rights organizations argue that civil unions would promote basic equality in the nation's most ethnically diverse state, but opponents fear the erosion of an island culture that values conventional family ties.

"Society in general is becoming more accepting," said Suzanne King, a real estate office manager who is raising her 9-year-old daughter, Shylar Young, with her partner of nearly 28 years, Tambry Young. "It's not unusual to come upon a gay family. There isn't this fear that by giving us rights, it's going to reduce the traditional family."

King and Young said they want a civil union law so gay couples can more easily adopt children, share health benefits and gain hospital visitation rights. They plan to enter into a civil union if the measure becomes law.

Religious groups have been taking out newspaper ads, setting up Web sites and holding rallies urging lawmakers to preserve traditional marriage.

One anti-gay Web site includes photos of two men kissing each other and others apparently in gay pride parades. It warns of a bad influence on Hawaii "keiki," the Hawaiian word for children.

AP

From right, Suzanne King, Shylar Young, 9, and Tambry Young, all of Honolulu, walk along the shore at Ala Moana Park in Honolulu, Hawaii, Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009.

The Mormon church, which campaigned in California last year for a gay marriage ban, has not openly rallied opposition to civil unions in Hawaii this year. But some members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been sharing e-mails urging people to calls their legislators opposing the bill.

"In Hawaii, people still believe in traditional marriage and the sanctity of marriage," said Dennis Arakaki, executive director of the Hawaii Family Forum, which also represents the Hawaii Catholic Conference. "There's no indication that values or perspectives have changed."

Several thousand people gathered at the state Capitol on Sunday for a demonstration organized by Arakaki's group.

Protesters held signs saying "We affirm traditional marriage" and "No to same sex marriage" while listening to speakers in the Capitol's open-air rotunda. Others signed petitions opposing the bill.

"We're gathered here because we want our voices heard," Wayne Cordeiro, senior pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship in Honolulu, said to loud cheers from the crowd.

Rally volunteer Julia Sula said she came to the demonstration with 200 to 300 other members of her Waipahu church, the Lighthouse Outreach Center.

"We believe in traditional marriage: a woman to a man. Not `man to a man' and `woman to a woman,'" said Sula, a 65-year-old retired social worker.

Only Massachusetts and Connecticut allow gay marriage, while Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey and New Hampshire allow civil unions. Californians voted in November to overturn a court ruling that allowed gay marriage, but the state still offers domestic partnerships that guarantee the same rights as marriage.

That means Hawaii could become the only Western state to give governmental blessing to same-sex unions.

"Our wedding industry would have a huge potential increase in business purely because there are people who would rather come to the islands rather than go to the East Coast to have a civil union performed," said the Rev. Mike John Hough of Kauai Island Weddings. "Some people say it's just marriage by another name, and that may be true. It's a perfect compromise."

In 1998, nearly 70 percent of Hawaii voters approved a constitutional amendment granting the state Legislature the power to reserve marriage for opposite-sex couples. The "defense of marriage" amendment, now in more than half of state constitutions, resulted in a law banning gay marriage in Hawaii but left the door open for civil unions.

The amendment negated a 1993 Hawaii Supreme Court ruling that found refusing to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples was discriminatory.

Since 1998, Hawaii's Legislature has considered civil unions several times, most recently in 2007, but the bills never made it out of their committees.

This year, the House Judiciary Committee passed the measure by a 12-0 vote, and the full House approved it 33-17, one vote short of the two-thirds majority needed to override a potential veto.

Attitudes have changed, said state Rep. Blake Oshiro, who sponsored this year's bill.

"People are more tolerant and accepting of diversity and recognizing the need for equality," said Oshiro, a Democrat.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 24, 1999

Reyes: Lobbyist needed

To protect CNMI interests in Washington, the island government needs to hire a lobbyist that will effectively help local leaders in blocking fresh attempts to wrestle control of labor and immigration to federal authorities, Senate Floor leader Pete P. Reyes said yesterday. But because of the tight financial situation of the government, the island will just have to settle with "personal appearance" by local officials in Washington to meet with U.S. congressional members and staffers, he said. "We're between a rock and a hard place and we simply have no money to do that," Reyes explained, "but we need to hire a lobbying firm."

Panel draws up prison plan

A government body tasked to map out a comprehensive jail management in the Northern Marianas is hoping to complete a plan on the new prison aimed to ease overcrowding in the existing facility and help stave off the spate of jailbreaks in recent months. Rep. Heinz Hofschneider, head of the prison task force formed last year by Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio, said they expect to break ground on the proposed $17 million jail within six months to hasten upgrade of conditions for close to a hundred inmates on the island. "The task force is under the direction of the governor to speed up things and we have done so," he said in an interview. Likewise, the U.S. Department of Justice yesterday reached an agreement with the CNMI to improve correctional and detention facilities here, which it denounced as unsafe and unsanitary as well as failing to meet constitutional standards.

February 24, 2000

CUC official demanded kickback, says witness

A witness for the prosecution yesterday revealed that Commonwealth Utilities Corp. Board Member Benjamin M. Sablan demanded payment from her in connection with the hiring of 12 Filipino workers for the utilities firm. Elizabeth P. Castaneda, owner of EPC Recruiting Service, testified during a trial before the U.S. District Court that the two payments she made were part of an earlier agreement with Mr. Sablan that he would get a $200 "commission" for each contract worker that will be sent to Saipan to work with CUC. The CUC official is now facing bribery charges before the federal court for allegedly accepting kickbacks from EPC as a reward for a business transaction involving the hiring of Filipino contract workers.

Release of convicted murderer alarms officials

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday expressed disappointment over the decision of authorities to allow inmate Jesse James Camacho, who was convicted for the brutal slaying of a 13-year-old boy in April 1998, to do community work last Wednesday. Mr. Tenorio said he was as much surprised just like everybody else that Mr. Camacho was chosen to assist the Board of Parole office in providing maintenance work. Assistant Attorney General Kevin Lynch, chief of the Criminal Division, strongly protested the decision allowing Mr. Camacho to get out of the corrections facility without close supervision.

February 24, 2003

Signs good for asylum aid

Sen. Thomas P. Villagomez said signs are encouraging that the Commonwealth will obtain U.S. aid in the CNMI's political asylum dilemma. The Senate Judiciary, Government and Law Committee chairman disclosed that the assistance may come in the form of technical expertise and funding from the federal government. Villagomez, who met with the State Department and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service last month in San Francisco, said U.S. officials have expressed willingness to train its CNMI counterparts on the implementation of political asylum application procedures.

Bank assets shrink 2.5 percent

The Commonwealth witnessed another drop in bank assets during the last three months of 2002-the fourth straight quarterly decline since January last year, according to a report from the CNMI Department of Commerce's Banking Division. Down by a little over 2.5 percent, bank assets slid to $253.1 million in the October-December 2002 period from the previous quarter's tally of $259.7 million, reflecting a significant slowdown in lending activities amid economic worries due to a possible United States-led attack on Iraq.

Island Snapshots

ASAHI NEWS STAR
A cameraman of Asahi News Star in Tokyo shoots footage of the historic World War II atomic bomb pits on the island of Tinian. The cable and satellite channel will feature the islands of Saipan and Tinian in their upcoming 20th anniversary special program, reaching 4.5 million households in Japan.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IT TRAINING
The staff of the Northern Marianas College's Information Technology Department takes time during a meeting to pose for a group photo. The IT Department has been dedicated to working on implementing changes and improvements for NMC's critical networking infrastructure. Next week, IT personnel will undergo technical training in the proper installation and troubleshooting of fiber optics data cabling lines. The training will be facilitated by Guam Community College's Electronics Department chair, John Limtiaco.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WHAT NOW?
Two Rifu Apparel workers—one carrying her baby while the other is six months pregnant—talk outside the Federal Ombudsman's Office. Labor revoked the work permits of 37 alien workers at Rifu after the factory closed last Feb. 6.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

The film crew of Asahi News Star, a satellite and cable station in Tokyo, Japan, capture the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival held Feb. 14-15, 2009, for an anniversary special of the station to air in March and April.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BLESSING
FR. Bong Lopez of San Roque Parish Church blesses the newly inaugurated NMI-Japan Cultural Center at Sugar King Park in Garapan Friday. Behind him are Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, Acting Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez, and Northern Marianas Housing Corp. director Joshua Sasamoto.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

GUBERNATORIAL BID
House Speaker Arnold Palacios reads a statement Thursday last week announcing his bid to run for lieutenant governor with Rep. Heinz Hofschneider as governor. Rep. Dave Apatang and Palacios' wife, Wella, listen.
KRISTI EATON

YOUNG AND OLD
Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, Finance Secretary Eloy Inos and Keichiro Saeki, the grandson of the real "Sugar King," Haruji Matsue, pose with the young and old at the inauguration of the NMI-Japan Cultural Center at Sugar King Park in Garapan Friday.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

FIRST LADY DONATES
The First Lady's Vision Foundation has donated $300 to the Saipan Southern High School JROTC Manta Ray Battalion for participating in the First Lady's Healthy Living parade that was held last Dec. 3, 2008. "With the great amount of money that was donated to the Battalion we are able to save the money for our cadet fund and use it for future preferences," the battalion said in a statement.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 47

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Lynn Knight PUBLISHER
Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER
The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Obama needs to address the deficit

President Obama says that it's time to stop kicking the can down the road when it comes to dealing with runaway entitlement spending and the grim long-term fiscal picture. This week will put those words to the test.

"We have to signal seriousness in this by making sure some of the hard decisions are made under my watch, not someone else's," he told The Post five days before taking office.

Is that about to happen? The signals are mixed, at best. The fiscal responsibility summit that Mr. Obama announced with fanfare has turned into something of a fiscal responsibility improv, a slapdash affair in which invitations were being issued as late as Friday. It seems destined to end up being yet another gabfest about the dire fiscal situation — albeit a presidential-level gabfest.

Talk of a commission to deal with Social Security produced such blowback from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, D-Nev., that the administration gave way—at least for now. This is not a positive omen. "Social Security, we can solve," Obama said in his visit to The Post. Yes, but not by ignoring it.

The fiscal outlook was bleak before the economic collapse and the addition of trillions in new liabilities on the federal balance sheet. A paper by the Brookings Institution's Alan J. Auerbach and William G. Gale depicts the new reality: not just deficits as far as the eye can see but trillion-dollar deficits as far as the eye can see. They find that even under optimistic assumptions, including having the economy return to full employment and letting stimulus spending expire in two years, deficits will range between $1 trillion and $1.3 trillion, in current dollars, for the next decade. This is, as Auerbach and Gale conclude, "an increasingly unsustainable and urgent fiscal problem."

To what extent will the Obama budget address this urgent problem? Monday's summit will be followed by Tuesday's address to Congress, which will focus on the economy, and Thursday's release of a budget, which will offer the first detailed look at the president's long-term fiscal plan.

There isn't likely to be a repeat of the Bush administration charade of submitting budgets that leave out known, huge costs, such as dealing with the alternative minimum tax. The administration's decision to return to showing a 10-year budgetary path, rather than the Bush administration's five, is another welcome sign of willingness to deal with fiscal reality.

To be clear, we're not talking about making cuts now; the economy needs boosting, and deficit spending is in order. But the large gap between revenue and spending must eventually be closed. Obama would be wise to use the economic crisis as a reason to rethink some of his campaign promises, such as not to raise taxes on anyone making less than $250,000 a year and to cut taxes further on those making up to $200,000 a year. How can additional tax cuts be affordable given the existing gap between spending and revenue? Likewise, if Obama is to propose —and find a way to pay for—a broad expansion of health insurance, he should reconsider his opposition to changing the preferential tax treatment of employer-provided health insurance. Why should some taxpayers without health insurance subsidize the overly generous policies enjoyed by others?

"This, by the way, is where there are going to be very difficult choices and issues of sacrifice and responsibility and duty," Obama said with respect to the fiscal challenge. "You have to have a president who is willing to spend some political capital on this. And I intend to spend some." The next several days would be a good time to start.

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THERE ARE STILL SOME ASPECTS OF FACEBOOK's TERMS OF SERVICE THAT BOTHER ME...
You agree to waste precious and valuable time searching for new friends and also boring the daylights out of the friends you currently have with the most mundane details of your sad, sad life...
chips
Cola
KOTERBA
OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

On being a community

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Two friends were out on a lake in a rowboat. One took out a small hand drill and began to drill a hole in the floor of the boat. His friend was flabbergasted. "Are you crazy? What are you doing? You will make a hole in the bottom of the boat. The water will flood in and the boat will sink. We will drown!"

The man with the drill replied: "Don't worry. I'm just drilling the hole under my seat!"

What the driller forgot and what we must always remember: All human beings are interconnected at the deepest level. What happens to one happens to all. When one person is hurt, every person hurts. When one person prevails, every person prevails.

Too often we forget we belong to the great "family of man" and as such must assume responsibility as a member. One of the "golden rules" is: We must not separate ourselves from the community. The community is you and me.

Shortly after World War II—not long after his release from a Nazi concentration camp—Pastor Martin Niemoller, a German theologian, said: "In Germany, they first came for the communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Catholic. Then they came for me. By that time, there was no one left to speak up."

I often ask myself what is happening to us today—this beautiful chain of islands with pristine beauty, with its friendly and fun-loving people. After overcoming centuries of foreign domination and humiliation, we sprang into an economic boom in only a handful of years that many other people envied. But today we seem to have lost our direction. We know our problems. We know the solutions to them. But for some unfathomable reason we lack the will to implement the solutions and once again regain economic stability. Why?

Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States in 1924, once stated: "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "Press on" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."

The saddest thing about what is happening to us today is even though we are on a roller-coaster down slide in our economic life, we still insist on not working together. Look at the Administration and the Legislature. They cannot agree on passing a budget for three times since last year. Each feels that he knows better. Each wants his way and each is refusing to sit down and talk and talk until the matter is resolved. Where is the "community" in their attitude?

Meanwhile we are begging for a postponement of the federalization act for another 180 days. What good will that do? Don't you think Washington is watching and smiling at us seeing how we fight with each other? Tell me bluntly: Why can't the two groups sit down face to face and hammer out a budget? Stop the backroom jockeying! Don't' send letters to each other. Talk directly to each other. Damn it! Lock yourselves in a room and don't come out until a budget is in your hands!

We are a community that is simply an extended family. Isn't that what we are always preaching when someone insults us? Aren't we screaming that this is our land and these are our customs? If that is so, then do it! Let's get our house in order and settle our differences. Life is made up of compromises and negotiations. When are we going to learn that?

"These are the times that try men's souls…I thank God, that I fear not. I see no real cause for fear…By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue; but cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils." These are the words of Thomas Paine written on Dec. 23, 1779.

Emblazon them solidly in our minds. This truth rings out as loudly today as they did over 200 years ago. To succeed always takes great strength and courage.

Remember the United States was just beginning to be born in 1779, much as we are now. There was much turmoil and much disagreement then also. Are we any different? But look at what they accomplished—the greatest nation on earth—the United States. Can't we also create the strongest and most beautiful islands in the Pacific area?

I quote the above because I feel that even though we are in a recession, few true austerity measures have been taken. We are still debating dilatory measures on how to resolve our economic dilemma. Where is the determination and persistence to resolve the issues? Where is the willingness to sacrifice? Few of us are willing to sacrifice. This can only mean that we don't trust each other and do not believe in our nation very strongly. We have lost faith.

On March 4, 1933, while the United States was at the bottom of the Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the 32nd President of the United States, spoke the following inspiring words in his first inaugural address:

"This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. …Let me assert that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. …Yet our distress comes from no failure of substance…

"Plenty is at our footsteps but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply…when there is no vision the people perish…The measure of the restoration lies in the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit…These

See ON BEING on next page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The birth of a great yearning for change

"We must believe that it is the darkest before the dawn of a beautiful new world. We will see it when we believe it."

—Saul Alinsky

By TINA SABLAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Tina Sablan is a representative for Election District 1 on Saipan.

Dear people of the Commonwealth:

A great yearning has begun to take root in our community.

More than just a dark frustration with tired old-school politics and bad governance, it is a deepening and positive desire for open, responsive, and accountable government. More than just a cynical determination to vote out leaders who represent little more than the status quo, it is a hopeful searching for fresh and honest candidates who are worth voting for, who would represent the best interests and aspirations of all the people of the Commonwealth, and who would place the public good over personal interests. More than just a weary recognition of the insanity of doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result, it is an unflinching faith in the tremendous potential of our islands and our people, and a belief that we can learn from our mistakes and change our course for the better.

This great yearning is the energy behind a brave and expanding vision for change that is shared by many in the Commonwealth, but not yet fully articulated and not yet accompanied by a plan of action.

Most of us know the challenges and the opportunities facing the Commonwealth. We live them every day. And in the last few years, in letters to the editor, public forums, blogs, workplaces, coffee shops, homes, classrooms, and social gatherings, we have collectively done an excellent job of diagnosing the ills of our community, celebrating the wonderful qualities that still exist, and imagining how life could be better here.

Our task now is to get organized, and to articulate, out of the conversations already taking place throughout our community, a cohesive vision of what we want the Commonwealth to be, to define our roles and strategies in bringing that vision to life, and to act according to that plan.

This letter is an open call for all concerned citizens of the Commonwealth to come together in sunrise meetings between Feb. 25 and March 25, 2009. Sunrise meetings are simply gatherings of people who believe that life in the Commonwealth can and should be better than what it is, and who are committed to making it so. Anyone can host a sunrise meeting, and may invite anyone to participate. Sunrise meetings can be held at any time and place of the group's choosing. The groups can be as large or as small as people want them to be, and they can focus on one issue or many.

Here are some suggested questions to guide our sunrise meetings:

1. What should the role of government be in the Commonwealth?

2. What are the most important opportunities facing the Commonwealth, and what should be done to maximize them? What are the most important challenges facing the Commonwealth, and what should be done to resolve them?

3. What specific government reforms should be prioritized for enactment?

4. To most effectively bring about needed changes in government, should concerned citizens of the Commonwealth focus on: a) organizing a coalition of candidates and supporters behind a common platform; b) organizing a new political party; c) joining and/or reorganizing an existing political party; or d) taking up another course of action? Please explain.

5. What core principles and values should guide the government of the Commonwealth?

6. What should life in the Commonwealth be like five years from today? Ten years from today?

7. What are the names of individuals we would like to see in public office? Please specify the public office, and describe the strengths and potential weaknesses of these individuals.

Sunrise groups are invited to answer as many questions as they would like, and to add questions of their own for discussion.

Between Feb. 25 and March 25, I will be hosting sunrise meetings on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. Individuals who would like to sign up for one of these sunrise meetings can reach me by phone at 285-3935, or by email at tinasablan@gmail.com. Individuals who would like to host sunrise meetings of their own may do so, of course, at any time, and are asked to submit the notes from their meetings no later than March 31, 2009.

Notes from sunrise meetings should include the names and contact information for all participants; the question(s) discussed; the answers the group arrived at; and any other issues, ideas, or comments. Notes may be submitted to me by:

- E-mail: tinasablan@gmail.com ; or
- Mail: PO Box 500994 • Saipan, MP 96950.

These notes will be compiled to develop a long-term vision for our community, to identify promising and viable candidates for public office who share that vision, and to begin mobilizing the resources and support that will be necessary to advance a new movement for good governance in the Commonwealth. The vision and plan of action that emerge from our sunrise meetings will be presented at a public forum in April.

These are, to be sure, trying times for us all. But they are not impossible. The challenges we face in the Commonwealth are serious and real, but they are not insurmountable. Our hardships are many, but they teach us much about who we are, and how we need to change.

And change indeed has already begun. At long last we are coming to realize our power as citizens to take back our government, to replace elected leaders who do not represent our best interests or our values, and to determine the direction of our own development as a community. The old political parties and powerful family dynasties that once maintained a stranglehold on local politics are now giving way under the scrutiny and discontent of an increasingly free-thinking and free-speaking electorate. Public discourse has never been more vigorous. Many of us are ready now to be part of a movement for change in the Commonwealth, and ready to organize our power and resources more effectively.

The sunrise meetings over the course of the next few weeks represent only the beginning of a movement for change. The direction and sustainability of that movement depend on us. What is our vision for the Commonwealth? How can each of us be the change we wish to see in our community? And how committed are we to fighting the good fight, now and in the years to come? The answers lie with us. Change begins with us.

To sign up for a sunrise meeting, or to find out more about how to host one of your own, please contact me at 285-3935, or by email at tinasablan@gmail.com.

Letters to the Editor

Rebranding the CNMI as a destination

With the establishment of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument the CNMI has the opportunity to rebrand itself as a travel destination.

Although it is not a fully protected marine reserve, the monument is one of the world's largest protected areas. This in itself is not something that will attract tourists to our shores. We have to give people a reason to want to visit the monument and our islands.

Saipan could sell itself as "The Gateway to the Mariana Trench." The stores in Garapan could sell t-shirts that read, "I dove the Marianas Trench." Maybe one day submersibles could take tourists to the underwater eruptions off the coast of Rota.

This will require a lot of work, and communities, businesses, and the government will have to contribute to the change.

One of the first steps toward this rebranding is for the federal government to build a Marianas Trench Marine National Monument visitors center. Half-museum, half-aquarium, the visitors center could and should be one of the premier tourism destinations in the Pacific.

I hope that our leaders on Capital Hill and in Washington, D.C. are working with the federal government to bring the visitors center to Saipan.

Alexie Villegas Zotomayor
Chinatown, Saipan

Confidence in the 'heart of the people'

So what, Mr. Marvin S. Pangelinan, you really expect the gubernatorial candidates to say "I am not confident enough to win the upcoming gubernatorial election?"

Come on, Marv, there is absolutely nothing to be disrespectful, hotheaded, overconfident, premature, contemptuous, or disappointed about, as you indicated in your letter. Rather, be mindful that every individual gubernatorial candidate who is running is confident enough to win, as expected of themselves. Indeed, it was natural and politically correct for Juan Pan to express himself that way, unless you're taking it personally, Mr. Pangelinan. Then count me out. In fact, a *Saipan Tribune* poll dated Feb. 2, 2009, showed Mr. Juan "Pan" T. Guerrero as 67 percent ahead of the other candidates, so what are you really insinuating about? Otherwise, just KISS: Keep it simple, stupid.

Juan Pan is the heart of the people.

Martin Sablan
As Matuis, Saipan

Cut government pensions

I'm nobody, and have only been living here for 14 years, so my thoughts don't count for much, but here's my two-cents worth anyway: I think that the Retirement Fund ought to cut all current pensions by 40 or 50 percent, until they get back on their feet (if they ever do). In this way, they could avoid going broke, and pensioners then getting nothing. Better to get 50 or 60 percent—temporarily—than nothing at all forever.

At the same time, this would allow the Fund to accommodate newly eligible retirees, while at the same time still building up their investment portfolio, thereby inching their way back to solvency.

Sorry, all you folks already drawing pensions, but like I say, it's better to take less for now, than start getting nothing—forever—in three to five years.

Either that, or perhaps our Legislature could get Mr. Sablan, our new Washington Delegate, to prevail upon the U.S. Congress to bring our Retirement Fund under U.S. Social Security—a plan whereby SS would take over all of the fund's assets, in exchange for us being "bought-in" to the system. After that, should the employer (the CNMI government) chose not to remit their full, legal, by-law contribution share to SS each month (as they have been doing with the Fund, all of these years), they would be in violation of federal law.

Ron Mandell
Gualo Rai, Saipan

ON BEING

From Page 10

dark days will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men…"

Those of you who have been elected to lead us must lead us boldly and without fear. To fear or to waver is to plunge us further into confusion and chaos. If we are not strong and determined during these trials, we may not have a "community" left after the smoke clears.

We the "community" plead with all the legislators and the Administration: Please put aside partisan politics and personal agendas. Sit down and talk to one another and resolve our problems. The solutions are right in front of us. If you show integrity, honesty, sincerity, and a willingness to negotiate, the "community" will back you and the United States will back us. Help is plentiful if we act accordingly.

We, the people, beg you to lead boldly and unselfishly. Together we can become a "community" again and regain the pride we are fast losing by begging for more money, by begging for a deal under federalization. Where lies the fortitude of our forefathers that forged these islands into the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas?

If we don't act as a closely knit community, we will continue to fall apart and slowly lose our identity. In closing, let me repeat: "These are the times that try the souls of men…" The future lies in our hands. Our children, the future community, awaits our wisdom. Restore our hope.

As President Roosevelt reminds us: "When there is no vision the people perish." Let us create the vision! Let us grab hold of our destiny and build it boldly. This is our community and we are responsible for it. Let us join hands and strive forward. One with many makes a community.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

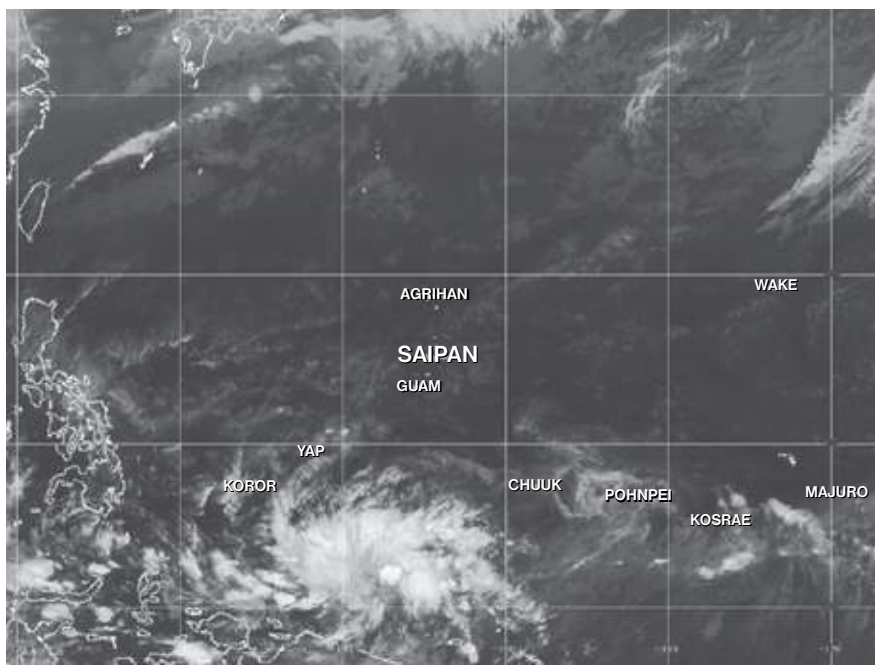
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84	▼77
Palau	Rain	▲86	▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲89	▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲88	▼77
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲90	▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲84	▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲68	▼57
Beijing	Flurries	▲43	▼21
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲82	▼72
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲75	▼67
London	Dreary	▲54	▼41
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲66	▼52
Manila	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼75
Melbourne	Sunny	▲73	▼54
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲75	▼62
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲37	▼27
Osaka	Rain	▲55	▼50
Paris	Cloudy	▲45	▼36
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲59	▼45
Rome	Showers	▲51	▼34
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲51	▼38
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	▲59	▼48
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	▲50	▼36
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲49	▼46
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲44	▼28

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, MONDAY, FEB. 23, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line runs southwestward from 25N160E to 23N150E to 22N140E. Cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 100 miles northwest of the shear line. Low-level winds converging south of the shear line are triggering scattered showers northwest of Wake Island within 70 miles of a line from 20N157E to 25N167E. Upper-level divergence is combining with trade-wind convergence to produce numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms south of 5N from 140E to 149E. Also, scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found south of 5N from 130E to 140E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
1:28 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet
8:07 AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
1:51 PM Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
7:03 PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Wednesday	6:37 AM	6:24 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	6:24 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	6:24 PM
Saturday	6:35 AM	6:24 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:50 AM	5:43 PM
Wednesday	6:27 AM	6:32 PM
Thursday	7:03 AM	7:22 PM
Friday	7:40 AM	8:13 PM
Saturday	8:18 AM	9:06 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

Official: Investigator to lead stimulus oversight

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama plans to announce Monday a former Secret Service agent who helped expose lobbyists' corruption at the Interior Department as his pick to oversee the $787 billion economic stimulus plan.

Obama is set to name Earl Devaney as chairman of the new Recovery Act Transparency and Accountability Board, an administration official said Sunday. Vice President Joe Biden also will be given a role coordinating oversight of stimulus spending.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because the White House had not made public the announcement.

Devaney, the inspector general of the Interior Department, helped turn up disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff's dealings at the department. The department's No. 2 official, Steven Griles, pleaded guilty to charges he lied during congressional testimony based in part on Devaney's investigation.

Italia Federici, co-founder of the Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy, and former Interior Department official Roger Stillwell also pleaded guilty to charges stemming from the Interior investigation.

Obama has pledged the Recovery Act Transparency and Accountability Board to be an at-large body to oversee how the government spends billions allocated to help the flailing U.S. economy. But with dozens of agencies and departments involved, Obama wanted a central group to independently monitor where those funds are going.

Obama also planned to tap Biden to meet regularly with Cabinet members, governors and mayors to make sure their efforts were quick and effective. His reports to Obama are expected to be posted at the administration Web site devoted to the bill, Recovery.gov.

Obama was set to announce Devaney during a Monday meeting with governors, who have largely supported the economic stimulus package because it will direct billions to their states for schools, roads and technology.

In addition to the Abramoff investigation, Devaney led a separate investigation into workers at the Minerals Management Service, part of the Interior Department. His review found a "culture of substance abuse and promiscuity" at the Denver and Washington offices of the service.

He has served as the inspector general—or in-house auditor—of the Interior Department since 1999.

Devaney worked as a senior official with the Secret Service, retiring in 1991. He then worked as head of criminal enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency.

A native of Massachusetts, Devaney earned a degree from Franklin and Marshall College.

SEC probed Stanford companies; red flags abounded

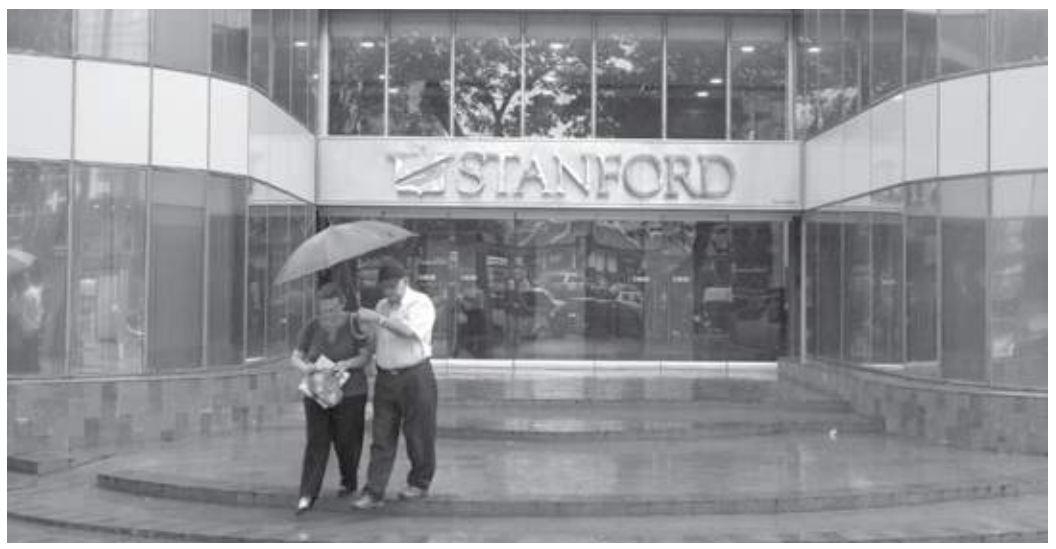
WASHINGTON (AP)—For years, there were red flags—so many they could have massed into a crimson blanket.

As with the Bernard Madoff case, the scandal surrounding billionaire R. Allen Stanford now seems clear and obvious in hindsight. Yet Stanford managed to run his alleged scheme even while the Securities and Exchange Commission and other regulators had him on their radar screens and investigated his businesses. Stanford wasn't charged until last week.

From his tiny accounting firm's office near a North London fish-and-chips shop to certificates of deposit promising outsized returns sold by a bank in Antigua, ample warning signs over the years suggested Stanford's business wasn't what it seemed.

Among them:

■ A finding by regulators in June 2007 that Stanford's company lacked enough capital to function properly as a securities brokerage firm. The company paid $20,000 to settle charges by the National Association of Securities Dealers without admitting or denying them.



AP

In this Feb. 19, 2009 file photo, customers of Stanford Bank walk outside one of its offices in Caracas, Venezuela.

■ Stanford's businesses were inspected and investigated several times, starting in 2006 by the SEC and in 2004 by the NASD, the brokerage industry's self-policing group, now called the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or FINRA. NASD's scrutiny resulted in several disciplinary actions: the regulator fined his brokerage company four times, with penalties totaling $70,000, for violations that included misleading investors in sales materials about the risks of the CDs.

■ A 2006 lawsuit by a former employee alleging that Stanford's company ran a Ponzi scheme. Two other ex-employees asserted in a suit in January 2008 that Stanford's Antigua bank, Stanford International Bank Ltd., sold CDs based on inflated returns and had destroyed documents.

■ A board of directors that included Stanford's father, his college roommate and a family friend who remained on the board years after suffering a debilitating stroke.

■ The Antigua-based accounting firm that audited the offshore bank was tiny and little known.

■ A 1999 Treasury Department advisory that warned U.S. banks to scrutinize transactions involving Antigua. It said a new regulator in Antigua was essentially a captive of offshore banks it was meant to supervise. (The advisory was lifted in 2001.)

Last week, the SEC accused Stanford in a civil lawsuit of a "massive" fraud. It said he peddled sham promises and funneled investors' money into real estate and other assets not easily turned into cash. FBI agents in Houston are running a parallel investigation.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

US Airways reverses soda stance: won't charge

ATLANTA (AP)—In the ultra-competitive airline industry, it's tough being out there alone as the only large network carrier to charge some passengers for soda, juice and coffee, especially in the middle of a deep economic recession that is sharply reducing demand for air travel. US Airways is acknowledging as much, planning to announce Monday that free beverage service will resume on March 1 on board its planes. The change, detailed in a memo to employees of the Tempe, Ariz.-based carrier sent Sunday evening by Chief Executive Doug Parker, reverses part of the a la carte business model the airline has trumpeted over the last year.

Govt reportedly mulls taking larger stake in Citi

WASHINGTON (AP)—Citigroup Inc. is reportedly negotiating with government officials to have the U.S. boost its stake in the troubled bank to as much as 40 percent, The Wall Street Journal said late Sunday, citing people familiar with the situation. Such a move by Citigroup would result in the New York-based bank ceding far more control to the feds than executives likely desire, and would dilute shareholders' investments. The Journal, which said Citigroup made the proposal to its regulators, noted that sources say executives would prefer to keep the government's stake closer to 25 percent. But with the company's shares trading at their lowest point in nearly two decades, Citigroup is seeking ways to stem further losses.

Oil hovers near $40 amid weak demand, OPEC cuts

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices hovered near $40 a barrel Monday in Asia as investors weighed a deepening U.S. recession against signs that OPEC production cuts are eroding supply.

Benchmark crude for April delivery rose 25 cents to $40.28 a barrel by midday in Singapore on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 15 cents to settle at $40.03 on Friday.

The March contract expired Friday at $38.94 a barrel.

Dismal jobs, industrial production and corporate earnings reports so far this year have heightened investor fears that the worst U.S. recession in decades is deepening.

J.C. Penney Co. reported a 51 percent drop in fourth-quarter profit as customers sharply cut spending on clothing and other more discretionary items. The department store chain also projected a wider first-quarter loss than analysts had predicted.

Home improvement retailer Lowe's said its fourth-quarter profit dropped 60 percent, and its earnings forecast for this year was worse than expected.

Crude investors have been looking to stock markets as a broad gauge of sentiment on the economy, and the Dow Jones industrial average fell 1.3 percent Friday and 6.2 percent last week to a 6-year low.

EU leaders back sweeping financial regulations

BERLIN (AP)—European leaders mounted a united front against the global financial crisis Sunday, proposing sweeping new market regulations, but it remained unclear whether economic giants like the United States and China would go along.

Heads of government and finance ministers from Europe's largest economies joined German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin to lay the groundwork for a common European position on economic reforms before an April 2 summit of the Group of 20 nations in London.

"Europe will own up to its responsibility in the world," Merkel told reporters following the talks.

Leaders from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic agreed to press for sanctions on tax havens, caps for managers' bonus payments and a stronger role and increased funding for the International Monetary Fund.

While the plans were based on an agenda adopted by the G-20 in November, the measures announced Sunday were more far-reaching and concrete, particularly on long-disputed issues such as hedge fund regulation.

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA
3,304.100
Down 48.900
(-1.46%)

HONG KONG
12,990.43
Up 291.26
(+2.29%)

JAKARTA
1,295.702
Down 1.24
(-0.10%)

TOKYO
7,367.73
Down 48.65
(-0.66%)

K. LUMPUR
889.71
Down 9.88
(-1.10%)

MANILA
1,891.04
Up 9.60
(+0.51%)

SINGAPORE
1,604.46
Up 9.52
(+0.60%)

SEOUL
1,091.9
Up 25.95
(+2.43%)

BANGKOK
433.18
Down 1.49
(-0.34%)

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW
7,365.67
-100.28

NASDAQ
1,441.23
-1.59

S&P
770.05
-8.89

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.541
British Pound	0.6892
Canadian Dollar	1.2455
Chinese Renmbi	6.8368
Euro	0.776
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7528
Indian Rupee	49.545
Indonesian Rupiah	11950
Japanese Yen	122.3300
Malaysian Ringgit	3.6645
New Zealand Dollar	1.9503
Philippine Peso	48.1
Singapore Dollar	1.5238
South Korean Won	1496.75
Swiss Franc	1.1523
Taiwan Dollar	34.657
Thailand Baht	35.605

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Nation

Levy family's grief endures, despite break in case

MODESTO, Calif. (AP)—In the first weeks after her only daughter disappeared, grief hit Susan Levy so hard she could not move from a fetal position on the living room couch.

By the time Chandra Levy's skull and bones were found in a park in the nation's capital a year later, her mother had found enough strength to dial Washington police detectives to ask why it was taking so long to find her daughter's killer.

Now, eight years after Chandra's death, Susan Levy said the sudden news late Friday that police planned to arrest a Salvadoran immigrant in the slaying may resolve the crime, but it will do nothing to stem her family's heartache.

"This helps a little," said Levy, staring listlessly in the den of her central California home. "But we still don't have our daughter and we have a life sentence without her. Grief is like a marathon. You don't get over it. It recycles itself."

Chandra Levy was 24 and had just completed an internship with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons when she disappeared in May 2001 after leaving her Washington, D.C., apartment.

After authorities questioned her congressman, Gary Condit, in the disappearance and revealed his affair with Levy, media from around the world descended on the family's split-level home amid the orchards of Modesto, a sleepy city 90 miles east of San Francisco.

Susan, her husband Bob and their son Adam retreated, and drew the blinds hoping to cope with their anguish in peace.

AP

Chandra Levy's parents Susan and Robert levy stand outside their Modesto, Calif. home to answer question from media, Saturday, Feb. 21, 2009.

Another mother, Donna Raley, rang their doorbell to offer support, and said she found Susan wasn't eating.

"She was somber, she was almost in a fetal position on that couch. I told her I, too, had lost a child and we sat and cried," Raley said. "I said she could either let whoever took her daughter take her and her marriage, too, or she could stand tall and fight back."

Bit by bit, Susan emerged with the help of Raley and other friends, and started leaving the house to practice yoga or ride her horses, anything to escape the television trucks parked in two single-file lines along their cul-de-sac.

Only a year after Chandra's disappearance on May 1, 2001, she and Raley founded a nonprofit advocacy group called Wings of Protection to help family members of violent crime victims who are missing.

Then, after unsuccessful searches by the D.C. police came the news that a dog walker had discovered Chandra's remains under the forest canopy of Rock Creek Park in May 2002.

Army charity hoards millions

FORT BLISS, Texas (AP)—As soldiers stream home from Iraq and Afghanistan, the biggest charity inside the U.S. military has been stockpiling tens of millions of dollars meant to help put returning fighters back on their feet, an Associated Press investigation shows.

Between 2003 and 2007—as many military families dealt with long war deployments and increased numbers of home foreclosures—Army Emergency Relief grew into a $345 million behemoth. During those years, the charity packed away $117 million into its own reserves while spending just $64 million on direct aid, according to an AP analysis of its tax records.

Tax-exempt and legally separate from the military, AER projects a facade of independence but really operates under close Army control. The massive nonprofit—funded predominantly by troops—allows superiors to squeeze soldiers for contributions; forces struggling soldiers to repay loans—sometimes delaying transfers and promotions; and too often violates its own rules by rewarding donors, such as giving free passes from physical training, the AP found.

AER was founded in 1942 to soften the personal financial hardships on soldiers and their families as the country ramped up its fight in World War II.

Today, AER's mission is to ease cash emergencies of active-duty soldiers and retirees, and to provide college scholarships for their families. Its emergency aid covers mortgage payments and food, car repairs, medical bills, travel to family funerals, and the like.

Vegas, Midwest seek the $8 billion for fast trains

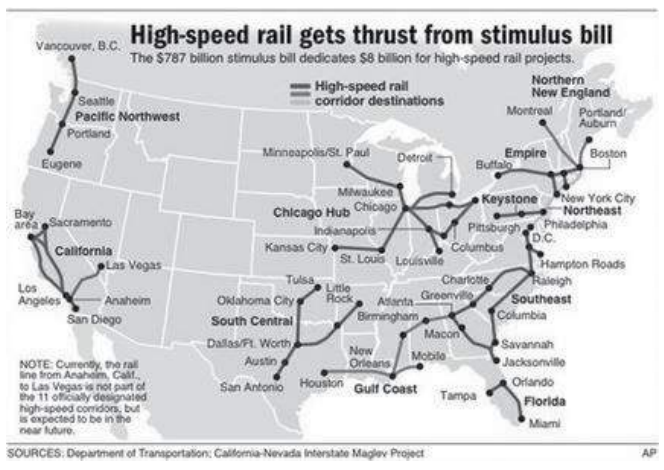
WASHINGTON (AP)—The Republicans attacking President Barack Obama's economic stimulus package point to a project they dub the "Sin Express"—a high speed rail link between Anaheim, Calif., site of Disneyland, and Las Vegas.

Not so fast.

In fact, competition for the $8 billion in mass transit construction is just beginning. Backers of numerous other planned high-speed rail corridors around the country are making their case for the money.

They notably include a Midwest initiative long supported by someone with even more clout than Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., who strongly supports the Anaheim-Las Vegas line. That would be former Illinois Sen. Obama.

It was Obama's White House that, in the final hours of negotiations over the $787 billion stimulus bill, sought and won the big sum for high-speed rail projects, far above what either the House or Senate had passed. Reid was happy to agree but there's no guarantee the Anaheim-Las Vegas line will win dollars, to be determined by the Transportation Department.



Also in the running are proposed high-speed corridors in the Northeast, the Northwest, Florida and the South.

Howard Learner, president of the Chicago-based Environmental Law and Policy Center, a group promoting a Midwest high-speed rail network, said his area is in excellent position to capture a good chunk of that money. The Federal Railroad Administration, he said, has recognized the Midwest initiative connecting Chicago and 11 metropolitan areas within 400 miles as the system most ready to go.

He and others brushed aside claims that the $8 billion was set aside for Reid's favorite. Obama, who expressed strong interest in high-speed rail investment during the campaign, and his chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, are both from Chicago. Obama's transportation secretary, Ray Lahood, also is from Illinois. So is the Senate's no. 2 Democrat, Richard Durbin.

Family to seek guardianship of chimp attack victim

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—The family of a woman who was mauled by a 200-pound chimpanzee says her twin brother plans to go to court this week to seek guardianship of the victim and her daughter.

"That's the way my sister would want it," Steve Nash said of his younger sister, 55-year-old Charla Nash, who remains under sedation at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, where she is being evaluated by teams of physicians.

Charla Nash's twin, Michael, needs the legal designation to make decisions on behalf of Charla and her 17-year-old daughter, Briana, who is staying with family friends in Connecticut, Steve Nash told The Associated Press on Sunday.

Charla Nash was transferred from Stamford Hospital in Connecticut to Ohio with massive injuries to her face and hands from the Feb. 16 attack by Travis, a chimpanzee owned by her friend, 70-year-old Sandra Herold of Stamford.

"She's stabilized and the evaluation process is going to take a long time. It's a slow process," said Steve Nash, who is with his sister in Ohio.

Nash said he's hopeful the physicians will speak publicly about his sister's condition later this week. Doctors haven't decided if she will be a candidate for a face transplant at the clinic, where the first face transplant in the U.S. was performed two months ago.

ACROSS THE NATION

Warden: Jail can't accommodate slaying suspect, 11

PITTSBURGH (AP)—A jail warden said Sunday he will ask a judge to move an 11-year-old boy accused of killing his father's pregnant girlfriend from an adult lockup to a juvenile detention center because the jail cannot accommodate the boy. Lawrence County Warden Charles Adamo said his 300-inmate jail cannot offer proper long-term care for Jordan Brown, of Wampum, who was charged Saturday with using his own 20-gauge shotgun to kill 26-year-old Kenzie Marie Houk. Houk was eight months pregnant with the child of Brown's father and also had two daughters, ages 4 and 7, who lived together in the rural home where authorities said she was slain as she lay in bed Friday. Police said the boy then hopped onto a school bus with Houk's oldest daughter. State troopers picked him up at school after tree trimmers called 911 when Houk's youngest daughter told them she thought her mother was dead. The boy has been held in a jail about 45 miles northwest of Pittsburgh since early Saturday, Adamo said. Brown faces a preliminary hearing on Thursday to determine if he'll stand trial. He was charged as an adult because Pennsylvania law allows prosecutors to charge children as young as 10 with criminal homicide.

Indicted federal judge set to go on trial

HOUSTON (AP)—U.S. District Judge Samuel Kent will be making judicial history when he enters a courtroom Monday—but it won't be the kind he'll want to remember. Kent will join the handful of federal judges who have taken part in a trial as a defendant, and he will be the first to face trial on a sex crime charge. The 59-year-old judge is accused of fondling two female court employees as he tried to force himself on the women and have them perform sex acts. Jury selection in his trial was set to begin Monday. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison and a fine of up to $250,000. Kent has pleaded innocent to five charges related to federal sex crimes and to one alleging obstruction of justice, in which he is accused of lying to an investigative committee. His nearly 19 years on the bench might buy him some credibility with the jury, said Barry Pollack, an attorney not connected to the case.

Police: 1 killed, 3 hurt in Los Angeles shooting

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Police say one man has been killed and three people are injured in a suspected gang-related shooting near downtown Los Angeles. Officer Karen Smith says the four victims were leaving a party early Sunday when a gunman in a sport utility vehicle opened fire. She says the shooting was believed to be gang related. Police say some of the victims returned fire. Smith says two of the four were taken to hospitals in critical condition, but the man died several hours later. The two other wounded victims are hospitalized in stable condition.

Asia

Rescue ending at Chinese mine where 74 killed

GUJIAO, China (AP)—Rescuers ended efforts Monday to find more survivors at a northern China coal mine where at least 74 people were killed the day before in underground explosions in the country's deadliest mine disaster in a year.

Of the more than 300 survivors of the accident at the Tunlan mine, 114 remained in the hospital, five of them in critical condition, said an official with the Shanxi provincial government spokesman's office, speaking on condition of anonymity, citing policy.

The spokesman said the cause of the blast remains under investigation.

The mine's manager, chief safety officer and chief engineer have been removed from their posts as part of the investigation, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. Xinhua did not identify the men by name or give other details.

A statement posted on the provincial government Web site said final checks on the mine were being conducted.

"The next step is to double-check at the bottom of the well ... to treat the injured and properly save all the data files in preparation for the investigation," the statement said.

A half-dozen ambulances stood parked Monday and a pair of policemen guarded the gates into the shaft of the mine in Gujiao near the provincial capital of Taiyuan—in contrast to the frenzied rescue operation that followed Sunday's pre-dawn explosions. Then, rescuers wearing headlamps and oxygen backpacks carried dozens of miners to safety.

But on Monday, cleaners simply swept up around the two stone lions marking the entrance to the mine.

The mine belonging to the state-run Shanxi Coking Group, China's largest producer of coking coal, and had boasted an excellent safety record. The company is the world's second-largest producer of coking coal, used in the production of steel, with sales revenues of more than 37 billion yuan ($5.4 billion) in 2007.

One survivor, Xue Huancheng, was quoted by Xinhua on Sunday as saying he had been ordered to flee because the ventilation system had broken down, possibly triggering a safety alarm.

Xie, like most of the other survivors, suffered carbon monoxide poisoning, Xinhua said, citing doctors. Exposure to carbon monoxide—an odorless, colorless gas—can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea and can lead to death.

Most coal mine explosions are sparked by the accumulation of unventilated coal gas.

Xinhua said the Tunlan Coal Mine had among the best facilities of any mine in China and no major accidents had occurred there in five years.

The death toll was the highest from a China coal mine accident since December 2007, when gas exploded in an unventilated tunnel in Linfen city, also in Shanxi province, killing 105 miners.

Beijing has promised for years to improve mine safety, and more than 1,000 dangerous small mines were closed last year. But China's mining industry remains the world's deadliest.

About 3,200 people died in coal mine accidents last year, a 15 percent decline from the previous year.

AP

In this photo released by the official Xinhua news agency, medical workers check a wounded miner at a hospital in Gujiao city in China's Shanxi province, on Sunday February 22, 2009.

Water plants reopen after chemical leak in China

BEIJING (AP)—Two water plants shut for three days after a massive chemical leak in eastern China resumed operation Monday, local officials and state media confirmed.

Authorities have arrested two officials from the Biaoxin Chemical Company—plant manager Ding Yuesheng and Hu Wenbiao, the company's legal representative—and closed the factory in Yancheng city in Jiangsu province, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

An investigation by environmental inspectors showed that the plant had been illegally discharging the chemical compound phenol into the Xinyanggang River, according to a notice on the local government Web site. Phenol compound is used to make products such as air fresheners, medical ointments, cosmetics and sunscreens.

Police are conducting a criminal investigation into the contamination of water supplies for the city's 1.5 million residents. Tap water to at least 200,000 people was cut on Friday, the statement said. But the city managed to restore supplies hours after the cut by increasing capacity at a third plant.

Du Yu, a city government spokesman, said Monday that tests showed the city's water was now drinkable, and that the water supply from the city's west water plant, along with a smaller one, would resume this afternoon.

Yancheng city officials have decided to stop all production by chemical factories operating near drinking water sources and move the factories as soon as possible, Xinhua reported. "Severe measures" will be taken against any other polluters, it said.

Pakistan to arm village militias to fight terror

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Authorities in a Pakistani border province plan to arm villagers with 30,000 rifles and set up an elite police unit to protect a region increasingly besieged by Taliban and al-Qaida militants, an official said Sunday.

Stiffer action in the North West Frontier Province could help offset American concern that a peace deal being negotiated in the Swat valley, a Taliban stronghold in the province, could create a haven for Islamist insurgents only 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the Pakistani capital.

Village militias backed by the United States have been credited with reducing violence in Iraq. Washington is paying for a similar initiative in Afghanistan.

The United States is already spending millions of dollars to train and equip Pakistani forces in the rugged region near the Afghan border but there was no sign it was involved in the militia plan. A U.S. Embassy spokesman could not be reached for comment.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said Saturday he will try to "remove the apprehensions of the world community" about the Swat deal when he meets U.S. officials in Washington next week, state-run media reported.

But it was unclear if Sunday's announcement had the backing of national leaders or the powerful army—or if handing out more guns in an already heavily armed society was wise.

Mahmood Shah, a former head of security for Pakistan's tribal regions, said arming civilians could trigger civil war in the northwest, where tribal and political tension is at fever pitch.

SKorea: NKorea has deployed new type of ballistic missile

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea recently deployed a new type of medium-range ballistic missile capable of reaching Australia and the U.S. territory of Guam, South Korea's Defense Ministry said Monday.

The report comes amid speculation that the isolated regime is also preparing to test-fire another, long-range missile able to hit Alaska.

The new intermediate-range ballistic missile can travel at least 1,800 miles (3,000 kilometers), which would put the Pacific island of Guam, the northern tip of Australia and much of Russia and India within striking distance, the ministry said in a report.

It did not offer any other details on the new missile, including exactly when or how many missiles have been deployed and where their launching grounds are.

The new missile is believed to be the same type displayed at a military parade in North Korea in 2007. The communist nation has been developing the missile since the late 1990s, according to a defense assessment on North Korea issued by the South every two years.

Pyongyang is also believed to be preparing to test-fire a version of its longest-range ballistic missile, the Taepodong-2, which is capable of reaching Alaska. Media reports say the missile being readied for launch could be an advanced version of the Taepodong-2 that could reach even farther and strike the U.S. west coast.

North Korea's missile program is a major security concern for the region, along with its nuclear weapons development.

The country test-launched a Taepodong-2 missile in 2006, but the rocket plunged into the ocean shortly after liftoff.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Sri Lankan rebels: Ready for truce with government

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lanka's separatist Tamil rebels said Monday they are ready for a cease-fire with the government, but told the United Nations in a letter that they refuse to lay down their weapons. The Tamil Tigers political head Balasingham Nadesan said in the letter that international calls for the rebels to lay down arms "is not helpful for resolving the conflict," saying that the weapons "are the protective shield of the Tamil people and their tool for political liberation." "We are ready to discuss, cooperate, and work together in all their efforts to bring an immediate cease-fire and work towards a political settlement," Balesan wrote in the letter to the U.N., which also was sent to Britain, Japan, Norway and the United States. The rebels have in recent months suffered unprecedented military defeats in their 25-year struggle against the government, losing most of their strongholds to government forces. They are boxed into a tiny sliver of land in the northeast.

Sumatran tigers kill 6 in a month in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—A string of attacks by rare Sumatran tigers has left six people dead in Indonesia in less than a month, including three mauled by at least one of the critically endangered cats this weekend, conservationists said Monday. A father and son - illegal loggers sleeping near a pile of wood—were killed as they slept Saturday in protected forest on Sumatra island. Another man in the same area was attacked just after dusk Sunday, said Didy Wurdjanto of the state conservation agency. The other victims were killed in late January, also in Sungai Gelam, a district 375 miles (600 kilometers) from the capital, Jakarta, but those tiger attacks all occurred near villages. The Sumatran tiger is the world's most critically endangered tiger subspecies.

70 sick in China after eating tainted pig organs

BEIJING (AP)—At least 70 people in southern China fell ill after eating pig organs contaminated by a banned animal feed additive, state media said Monday. The cases underscore a continuing battle with food safety in a country where supply chains are murky and the rising cost of labor, land and fuel sometimes force producers to cut corners in order to make a profit. Three people were in the hospital, while the rest were discharged after being treated for stomach aches and diarrhea over the weekend, the China Daily said. The pig organs tainted by the steroid clenbuterol were sold last week in markets in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, it said. Clenbuterol helps to build muscle and is frequently used as an illegal performance enhancing drug by track and field athletes. China has banned its use as a pig feed additive.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Netanyahu, Livni meeting ends without agreement

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel's hard-line prime minister designate, Benjamin Netanyahu, promised Sunday to work with the United States to promote peace in the region as he sought to forge a moderate government with his chief rival—but did not reach a deal. Netanyahu's crucial meeting with the moderate Tzipi Livni was intended to persuade her to ally with him in forming a new government and avoid an unwelcome alliance with ultra-nationalists to his right. But after their meeting, Livni said the two were still at odds regarding talks with the Palestinians. "We didn't reach any agreement. There are deep disagreements on this issue," she said. "This evening did not progress us on the core issues in a way that we can talk about a joint path." Netanyahu said he and Livni found many points of agreement and their disagreement could be "overcome with goodwill." He did not give details of the meeting.

Iraqi lawmaker faces charges as attack mastermind

BAGHDAD (AP)—The confessions told of high-stakes terror and street-level thuggery: former bodyguards accused a combative Sunni lawmaker on Sunday of directing a wave of violence that ranged from a 2007 suicide blast inside the parliament building to kidnappings seeking just $30 ransoms. In tapes released by Iraqi authorities, two former bodyguards of Mohammed al-Dayni—one of them his nephew—detailed a nearly three-year trail of bloodshed and atrocities they allege was masterminded by the 39-year-old electrical engineer, including burying alive more than 100 people in an act of revenge. Al-Dayni rejected the allegations as "untrue and baseless" and suggested it was political punishment for standing up to the Shiite-led government.

Egypt briefly opens Gaza border for 1,000 to cross

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Hundreds of travelers left blockaded Gaza for Egypt on Sunday, in one of the sporadic openings that enable students, patients and others with Egyptian visas to cross the border. About 1,000 university students and holders of foreign residency permits were eligible to cross, and by mid-afternoon Sunday, about 600 people had made the trip, border officials said. Also Sunday, the bodies of four people were found in a smuggling tunnel under the Gaza-Egypt border, a day after another body was discovered in the area. Medics said all five suffocated. The 20-month closure of Gaza by Israel and Egypt has boosted smuggling of arms and consumer goods through hundreds of border tunnels. Israel destroyed dozens of tunnels during its three-week offensive against Gaza's Hamas rulers last month, but smuggling continues.

Unrest in Caribbean has roots in slavery past

AP

People attend the funeral of labor union member Jacques Bino in Petit Canale, in the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009.

POINTE-A-PITRE, Guadeloupe (AP)—Protests that have nearly shut down the French Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique are not just about demands for lower prices and higher wages: For demonstrators they are no less than a battle against the vestiges of slavery.

Afro-Caribbean islanders—most of whose forbears toiled in the sugarcane fields under the yoke of slavery more than 160 years ago—not only resent France's handling of the global economic crisis, they have long resented that slaveholders' descendants control the economy on both islands.

They also suspect that businesses earn too high a profit on goods, most of which are imported.

This resentment against the primarily white, elite slaveholder descendants, known as bekes (bay-KAY), has lent an especially sharp edge to weeks of demonstrations that at times have erupted in gunfire, arson, looting, and the death of one activist in Guadeloupe.

"They've got the money, they've got the power, they've got Guadeloupe," snapped protester Lollia Naily. "This is not a race thing. It is a money thing and it is a power thing."

Protesters in Martinique also have rejected the bekes, with frequent chants of "Martinique is ours, not theirs!" Bekes own most industries in Martinique—but represent only about 1 percent of the island's 401,000 residents.

Deep economic and social disparities divide France from its overseas possessions: Unemployment in Guadeloupe is about 23 percent, compared with 8 percent on mainland France, and 12 percent of islanders live in poverty, compared with 6 percent of mainlanders, according to the most recent statistics.

The conflict extends beyond the Caribbean: Islanders living in mainland France are relegated to low-level jobs and are absent from senior positions in business, the military and government, revealing a "color fracture in French society," said Patrick Lozes, head of the Representative Council of Black Associations.

Islanders demand that France treat them as equals—wherever they are living—and question why food is more expensive here than on the mainland.

Homemade Bomb in Cairo bazaar kills 1, injures 21

CAIRO (AP)—A homemade bomb exploded in a 650-year-old bazaar packed with tourists Sunday, killing a French woman and wounding at least 21 people, most of them foreigners.

Within an hour, police found a second bomb and detonated it safely. Security officials said three people were in custody.

"We were serving our customers as usual, and all of a sudden there was a large sound," said Magdy Ragab, 42, a waiter at a nearby cafe. "We saw heavy gray smoke and there were people running everywhere ... Some people were injured by the stampede, not the shrapnel."

An expert on Islamic extremism said the attack might have been a response to Israel's deadly offensive in Gaza last month.

Tourism is one of Egypt's major sources of foreign income and has been a target in past attempts to harm the government, which is now trying to negotiate a long-term Gaza cease-fire. Sunday's attack was the first on tourists in three years.

The blast hit the bustling main plaza at the Khan el-Khalili, a bazaar popular with tourists next to one of Cairo's most revered shrines, the Hussein mosque. Blood stained the stones in front of the mosque, where worshippers had been conducting evening prayers.

"I was praying and there was a big boom and people started panicking and rushing out of the mosque, then police came and sealed the main door, evacuating us out of the back," said Mohammed Abdel Azim, 56.

Montasser el-Zayat, a lawyer who has represented Islamic extremists, told the Arabic news channel al-Jazeera the attack may be linked to anger over the Israeli offensive.

"The nature of the explosion looks like an act carried out by young, inexperienced amateurs whose emotions were inflamed by the events of Gaza," said el-Zayat, who once had links with extremist groups himself.

Egypt has been trying to broker a long-term cease-fire between Israel and the Hamas militants who run Gaza. A fragile cease-fire has been in place since Israel's offensive left about 1,300 Palestinians dead.

Initial reports on Sunday's attack said a pair of grenades were thrown, but a government statement said the attack involved a homemade bomb placed under a bench in the main plaza.

2 escape Athens prison by helicopter, for 2nd time

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—For the second time in their lives, two robbers escaped from a high-security prison Sunday by scaling a rope ladder to a hovering helicopter amid a gun battle with guards.

The men remained missing late Sunday night. They had been scheduled to appear before a magistrate Monday about their first escape—from the same prison—three years ago.

The shaken government quickly dismissed three Justice Ministry officials, and the prime minister scheduled an emergency meeting of part of his cabinet Monday to discuss the country's prisons.

"This was an insult which I will not accept ... I will take measures as harsh as necessary," Justice Minister Nikos Dendias announced.

Vassilis Paleokostas, 42, and Alket Rizaj, 34, were picked up by a helicopter that flew over the courtyard of Athens' Korydallos prison Sunday afternoon. They climbed a rope ladder thrown to them by a woman passenger, the Justice Ministry said.

Guards on the ground opened fire and the woman fired back with an automatic rifle, authorities said. No injuries were reported.

Police said an elderly couple found the helicopter abandoned near a highway north of Athens, with its fuel tank leaking from a bullet hole.

The pilot was bound and gagged, with a hood over his head. He told police the helicopter was chartered by a couple who said they wanted to go from the town of Itea in central Greece to Athens. The couple had chartered the helicopter a number of times in the previous weeks.

This time, the pilot said, the couple threatened him with an AK-47 rifle and a grenade and forced him to fly to the prison.

Despite their previous escape, the two inmates had been allowed to take their daily walk on the prison grounds together on breaks from solitary confinement.

Their first escape by helicopter was on June 4, 2006. That operation had been masterminded by Paleokostas' elder brother Nikos, himself a convicted criminal who escaped from the same prison in 1990 during a mass breakout.

The elder Paleokostas was recaptured and is still in jail. He has been convicted of 16 bank robberies.

Rizaj, an Albanian immigrant, was also recaptured in September 2006, while Vassilis Paleokostas was captured in August 2008.

While on the run, Paleokostas is suspected of masterminding the June 2008 kidnapping of a prominent Greek industrialist, Giorgos Mylonas, who was held for 13 days until his family paid a ransom.

Iran to begin its operation of 1st nuclear power plant

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's first nuclear plant will begin long-delayed pilot operations on Wednesday, the state atomic energy agency said.

A nuclear official in Russia, which is helping build the plant, however, said no major milestone is expected on that day.

"The pilot stage operation of the power plant will start on Wednesday," Iranian atomic agency spokesman Mohsen Delaviz told the state news agency on Sunday.

He added that the preliminary phase will take place during a visit by Sergei Kiriyenko, the head of Russia's state nuclear agency.

The long-awaited 1,000-megawatt light-water reactor, which was built in the southern Iranian port of Bushehr with the help of Russia under a $1 billion contract, was previously scheduled to become operational in fall 2008. Some 700 Iranian engineers were trained in Russia to operate the power plant.

Rosatom spokesman Sergei Novikov, however, said no major milestone in the preparations for Bushehr's start-up is expected during Kiriyenko's visit.

Novikov said that Rosatom expects it to be a "just a working visit" and that as before, the reactor's physical start-up is expected by the end of the year. "Everything is on schedule," he told The Associated Press.

"It is a regular meeting on the site, with Russians and the Iranian organizations which are working on the project," Novikov said of Wednesday's event.

Overdrive

2009 NISSAN VERSA 1.6

A no-frills car for this age of austerity

By WARREN BROWN
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

The 2009 Nissan Versa 1.6 is a no-frills car for this age of austerity. It won't turn heads, but it's a surprisingly spirited ride. THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—It was a car appropriate for the times—spare, base, depressing.

It had crank windows, the kind you manually roll up and down.

It was bereft of entertainment value—no radio, no connections for iPod or MP3 player, no navigation system or video screen.

There was a blank space where a radio would be found on the instrument panel of a normal car. But there was little normal about the subcompact 2009 Nissan Versa 1.6 sedan, a conveyance more symbol than automobile.

It was an exercise in motorized austerity.

Among young people unaccustomed to such things as crank windows and manually operated door locks, it came as a shock.

"Is this a joke?" asked Q Manglapus, the 13-year-old son of my *Washington Post* associate for vehicle evaluations, Ria Manglapus. He wasn't laughing.

"Is this a joke?"

No, it isn't.

It is what we have come to in an age when banks borrow money from taxpayers in order to exist as banks, when financiers receive bonuses for bankrupting finance companies, when pink slips flow like rivers from businesses going out of business.

It is all many people, desperately in need of personal transportation, can afford in an age of hostile economic climate change—rising unemployment, vanishing retirement savings, frozen credit.

It's no joke. It is, instead, what Nissan officials believe is a possible answer to hard times. It's the generic car—four wheels, front-wheel drive, an engine, a five-speed manual transmission and a steering wheel.

There are seats for five people. They are monks' chairs covered with the moral equivalent of sackcloth—a durable, but less-than-comfortable, decidedly unattractive fabric.

The most basic vinyl—the hard, gray-colored industrial sort—serves as covering material for the Versa 1.6's instrument and door panels. It is what you get from Nissan in the United States for a car with a base sticker price of $9,900.

The question: Will getting it get you where you have to go?

The answer: Yes it will; and it will do so reliably and economically—from 34 to 40 miles per gallon on the highway, depending on your driving style, which can be surprisingly spirited in the little stripped-down Versa 1.6.

It's no joke.

You can rediscover the joy of driving in this car, because there is nothing in or about it to distract you from the task of driving. You key the ignition, step on the clutch, put it in gear, hit the accelerator and go.

There's no fussing with the steering wheel, because the steering wheel isn't adjustable. It's stuck in a fixed position, as frozen as credit. Take it or leave it.

We took it and found to our surprise that austerity motoring has its advantages. It's actually faster. Besides not having to bother with getting the Versa 1.6's seats or steering wheel into the right position, there's no time wasted hunting for the right radio station, or plugging in this or that.

And if driver and passengers choose not to talk, the driving experience is almost Zen-like—the calming zip-zip buzz of the Versa 1.6's inline, four-cylinder, 107-horsepower engine; the gentle whizz-slap-bump of its 14-inch-diameter radial tires against the road; the whirr-wheeee sound of air rushing through the gaps between its door and hood fittings.

It is an experience more revelatory than humbling. It is what many of us loved about driving long ago when flipping hamburgers was only a part-time job, a way to get gas money. It is a celebration of the very idea of the automobile, of being able to get behind the wheel of anything capable of motorized movement and making it go.

NUTS & BOLTS

By WARREN BROWN
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

COMPLAINT
In many respects, this is the most boring car we've ever driven. But in certain other ways, it's also one of the most engaging.

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING
The little Versa 1.6 is surprisingly agile and spirited — a four-wheeled urban scooter perfect for the city.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT
Easily ignored, great for parking in high-theft neighborhoods.

BODY STYLE/LAYOUT
The Versa 1.6 is a front-engine, front-wheel-drive, subcompact economy car. In this iteration, it is the bottom, the absolute base of the nine-car Versa lineup, which includes sedans and hatchbacks.

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION
The 1.6-liter, inline four-cylinder, 16-valve engine in the Versa 1.6 develops 107 horsepower at 6,000 revolutions per minute and 111 foot-pounds of torque at 4,600 revolutions per minute. The engine is mated to a five-speed manual transmission.

CAPACITIES
There are seats for five people. Maximum luggage capacity is 13.8 cubic feet. The fuel tank holds 13.2 gallons of recommended regular unleaded gasoline.

MILEAGE
We averaged 37 miles per gallon in highway driving and 28 miles per gallon in the city, where we spent lots of time idling in jammed traffic.

SAFETY
Standard equipment includes head and side air bags. Antilock brakes are optional. Buy them. Electronic stability and traction control were not available at this writing.

PRICE
The price on the 2009 base Nissan Versa 1.6 sedan is $9,900. Dealer's base price is $9,759. Price as tested is $11,090, including $405 in options (four-wheel antilock brakes and floor mats) and a $695 transportation charge. Dealer's price as tested is $10,790. Prices sourced from Nissan, Edmunds.com and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

PURSE-STRINGS NOTE
A heater is included as standard equipment.

2009 CHEVROLET TRAVERSE LT2

A capable hauler with a voice of its own

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

DETROIT—We didn't have access to a corporate jet. We were too cheap to fly commercial. So, we drove here—528 miles from Virginia to the North American International Auto Show.

"We" included me and my wife, Mary Anne; my Washington Post associate for vehicle evaluations, Ria Manglapus; and my daughters Binta and Kafi. We used a General Motors crossover utility vehicle, the 2009 Chevrolet Traverse LT2.

Had GM Chairman Richard Wagoner driven a Traverse instead of flown in a corporate jet the first time he came to Washington to beg for federal bailout money, he would have made a much better impression. He would have presented proof-on-wheels what Congress needs to know, which is that today's GM makes darned good cars and trucks.

Here's arguing that the Traverse and its sibling full-size crossovers—the Buick Enclave, GMC Acadia and Saturn Outlook, all derived from GM's "Lambda" vehicle platform but all imbued with distinct personalities—are among the best in the business. Anyone shopping for a family hauler would do well to put one or all of those GM models on the list.

The Traverse is the latest and, in terms of base price, the least expensive of the bunch. But it is by no means the least capable.

Our journey's mission was simple. We wanted to test GM's claim that the Traverse could get 24 miles per gallon on the highway using regular unleaded gasoline. That's pretty decent mileage for a vehicle designed to carry up to eight people and their stuff.

We wanted to test long-distance driving comfort. What better way to do that than to load the Traverse with four of the world's most critical beings—Mary Anne, Ria, Binta and Kafi. A trip like that could have very quickly turned into a journey to hell. It didn't. It was a fun drive—even through the ice and snow of the Pennsylvania and Ohio turnpikes and the snow-bound Michigan roads leading here.

We wanted to give GM's OnStar turn-by-turn, voice-navigation system a thorough workout. Here's the deal: You call OnStar. You tell an OnStar agent where you want to go. OnStar automatically programs your route via satellite and sends the information to your vehicle.

There is no need to look at a map, no need to follow a little arrow on a dashboard-mounted video screen. OnStar's guidance instructions are audio. Apparently, they are also gender-sensitive.

True story: A woman's OnStar voice greeted me when I started driving the Traverse. But I ignored her directions several times, once dismissing them as "wrong" and "silly." Suddenly, OnStar's audio directions started coming in a man's voice, much to the howling delight of my female passengers.

Mary Anne was beside herself. "Wow!" she said. "OnStar knows who you are—another man who can't take directions from a woman!"

For the record, I listen to and can take directions from women and do so quite frequently and happily. Why the OnStar voice changed from that of a woman to that of a man, I don't know. But when Ria was driving, OnStar's directional guidance began in a woman's voice and stayed that way. The bottom line is that OnStar got us to where we wanted to go with very little trouble.

The Traverse, equipped with all-wheel-drive, a 281-horsepower V-6, and a six-speed transmission that can be shifted automatically or manually, got us through nasty winter weather on some tricky mountain roads without slipping, sliding or in any other way losing stability.

We got 23 miles per gallon on the highway—one mpg less than what GM promised. But that was pretty good considering weather, road and lots of luggage.

On a closing note, Kafi, our resident audiophile and MP3 expert, wanted me to mention that the Traverse LT2 has "rockin' sound" and "cool hookups." To those of you for whom such things are important, I suppose you know what she means.

Life & Style

'Slumdog' rules Oscars with 8 prizes, best picture

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Slumdog Millionaire" took the best-picture Academy Award and seven other Oscars on Sunday, including director for Danny Boyle, whose ghetto-to-glory story paralleled the film's unlikely rise to Hollywood's summit.

The other top winners: Kate Winslet, best actress for the Holocaust-themed drama "The Reader"; Sean Penn, best actor for the title role of "Milk"; Heath Ledger, supporting actor for "The Dark Knight"; and Penelope Cruz, supporting actress for "Vicky Cristina Barcelona."

A story of hope amid squalor in Mumbai, India, "Slumdog Millionaire" came in with 10 nominations, its eight wins including adapted screenplay, cinematography, editing and both music Oscars (score and song).

"Just to say to Mumbai, all of you who helped us make the film and all of those of you who didn't, thank you very much. You dwarf even this guy," Boyle said, holding up his directing Oscar.

The filmmakers accepted the best-picture trophy surrounded by both the adult professional actors who appeared among the cast of relative unknowns and some of the children Boyle cast from the slums of Mumbai.

The film follows the travails and triumphs of Jamal, an orphan who artfully dodges a criminal gang that mutilates children to make them more pitiable beggars. Jamal witnesses his mother's violent death, endures police torture and struggles with betrayal by his brother, while single-mindedly hoping to reunite with the lost love of his childhood.

Fate rewards Jamal, whose story unfolds through flashbacks as he recalls how he came to know the answers that made him a champion on India's version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

As he took the stage to accept his prize for playing slain gay-rights pioneer Harvey Milk, Penn gleefully told the crowd: "You commie, homo-loving sons of guns."

He followed with condemnation of anti-gay protesters who demonstrated near the Oscar site and comments about California's recent vote to ban gay marriage.

"For those who saw the signs of hatred as our cars drove in tonight, I think it's a good time for those who voted for the ban against gay marriage to sit and reflect on their great shame and their shame in their grandchildren's eyes if they continue that support," Penn said. "We've got to have equal rights for everyone."

For his demented reinvention of Batman villain the Joker, Ledger became only the second actor ever to win posthumously, his triumph coming exactly 13 months after his death from an accidental overdose of prescription drugs.

His Oscar for the Warner Bros. blockbuster was accepted by Ledger's parents and sister on behalf of the actor's 3-year-old daughter, Matilda.

"I have to say this is ever so humbling, just being amongst such wonderful people in such a wonderful industry," said his father, Kim Ledger. "We'd like to thank the academy for recognizing our son's amazing work, Warner Bros., and Christopher Nolan in particular for allowing Heath the creative license to develop and explore this crazy Joker character."

Since his death, the 28-year-old Ledger has gained a mythic aura akin to James Dean, another rising star who died well before his time.

The Joker was his final completed role, a casting choice that initially drew scorn from fans who thought Ledger would not be up to the task given Jack Nicholson's gleefully campy rendition of the character in 1989's "Batman."

In the months before Ledger's death, buzz on his wickedly chaotic performance swelled as marketing for the movie centered on the Joker and the perverted clown makeup he hid behind.

Ledger's death fanned a frenzy of anticipation for "The Dark Knight," which had a record $158.4 million opening weekend last summer.

The previous posthumous Oscar recipient was Peter Finch, who won best actor for 1976's "Network" two months after his death.

Cruz triumphed as a woman in a steamy three-way affair with her ex-husband and an American woman in Woody Allen's romance.

"Has anybody ever fainted here? Because I might be the first one," Cruz said, who went on with warm thanks to Allen. "Thank you, Woody, for trusting me with this beautiful character. Thank you for having written all these years some of the greatest characters for women."

"OK, that fainting thing, Penelope," Winslet joked later as she accepted her best-actress prize for "The Reader," in which she plays a former concentration camp guard in an affair with a teen. "I'd be lying if I haven't made a version of this speech before. I think I was probably 8 years old and staring into the bathroom mirror, and this would be a shampoo bottle. But it's not a shampoo bottle now."

It was Winslet's first win after five previous losses.

"Slumdog" writer Simon Beaufoy, who adapted the script from Vikas Swarup's novel "Q&A," said there are places he never could imagine being.

"For me, it's the moon, the South Pole, the Miss World podium, and here," Beaufoy said.

The epic love story "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," which led with 13 nominations, had three wins, for visual effects, art direction and makeup.

"The Dark Knight" had a second win, for sound editing.

"Milk" writer Dustin Lance Black offered an impassioned tribute to Milk.

"If Harvey had not been taken from us 30 years ago, I think he would want me to say to all the gay and lesbian kids out there tonight who have been told they are less than by the churches, by the government, by their families, that you are beautiful, wonderful creatures of value, and that no matter what anyone tells you, God does love you and that very soon, I promise you, you will have equal rights, federally, across this great nation of ours," Black said.

"Man on Wire," James Marsh's examination of tight-rope walker Philippe Petit's dazzling stroll between the towers of the World Trade Center in 1974, was chosen as best documentary.

The acting categories were presented by five past winners of the same awards, among them last year's actress winners, Marion Cotillard and Tilda Swinton, plus Halle Berry, Nicole Kidman, Kevin Kline, Sophia Loren, Anthony Hopkins, Shirley MacLaine and Robert De Niro.

It was a much different style for the Oscars as each past recipient offered personal tributes to one of the nominees, without clips of the nominated performances. Awards usually are done in chit-chat style between a couple of celebrity presenters.

After last year's Oscars delivered their worst TV ratings ever, producers this time aimed to liven up the show with some surprises and new ways of presenting awards. Rather than hiring a comedian such as past hosts Jon Stewart or Chris Rock, the producers went with actor and song-and-dance man Hugh Jackman, who has been host of Broadway's Tony Awards.

Instead of the usual standup routine, Jackman did an engaging musical number to open the show, saluting nominated films with a clever tribute.

Jackman later did a medley staged by his "Australia" director Baz Luhrmann with such performers as Beyonce Knowles and "High School Musical" stars Vanessa Hudgens and Zac Efron.

"Slumdog Millionaire" went into the evening after a run of prizes from earlier film honors.

The film nearly got lost in the shuffle as Warner Bros. folded its art-house banner, Warner Independent, which had been slated to distribute "Slumdog Millionaire." It was rescued from the direct-to-video scrap heap when Fox Searchlight stepped in to release the film.

"Slumdog" composer A.R. Rahman, a dual Oscar winner for the score and song, said the movie was about "optimism and the power of hope."

"All my life, I've had a choice of hate and love," Rahman said. "I chose love, and I'm here.

AP

Producer Christian Colson, along with the cast and crew, accept the Oscar after the film "Slumdog Millionaire" won best motion picture of the year during the 81st Academy Awards Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

WINNERS' LIST

Complete list of winners at the 81st annual Academy Awards, presented Sunday night at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles:

- Motion Picture: "**Slumdog Millionaire**."
- Actor: S**ean Penn**, "Milk."
- Actress: **Kate Winslet**, "The Reader."
- Supporting Actor: **Heath Ledger**, "The Dark Knight."
- Supporting Actress: **Penelope Cruz**, "Vicky Cristina Barcelona."
- Director: **Danny Boyle**, "Slumdog Millionaire."
- Foreign Film: "**Departures**," Japan.
- Adapted Screenplay: **Simon Beaufoy**, "Slumdog Millionaire."
- Original Screenplay: **Dustin Lance Black**, "Milk."
- Animated Feature Film: "**WALL-E**."
- Art Direction: "**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button**."
- Cinematography: "**Slumdog Millionaire**."
- Sound Mixing: "**Slumdog Millionaire**."
- Sound Editing: "**The Dark Knight**."
- Original Score: "**Slumdog Millionaire**," A.R. Rahman.
- Original Song: "**Jai Ho**" from "Slumdog Millionaire," A.R. Rahman and Gulzar.
- Costume: "**The Duchess**."
- Documentary Feature: "**Man on Wire**."
- Documentary (short subject): "**Smile Pinki**."
- Film Editing: "**Slumdog Millionaire**."
- Makeup: "**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button**."
- Animated Short Film: "**La Maison en Petits Cubes**."
- Live Action Short Film: "**Spielzeugland (Toyland).**"
- Visual Effects: "**The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.**"

■ ■ ■

Academy Award winners previously announced this season:
Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award (Oscar statuette): Jerry Lewis
Gordon E. Sawyer Award (Oscar statuette): Pixar Animation co-founder Ed Catmull

NOTABLE QUOTES

"You commie homo-loving sons of guns. I did not expect this, and I want it to be very clear that I do know how hard I make it to appreciate me, often, but I am touched by the appreciation."
—Sean Penn, accepting the best actor Oscar for his role in "Milk."

"I'd be lying if I said I haven't made a version of this speech before. I think I was probably 8 years old and staring into the bathroom mirror, and this would have been a shampoo bottle. Well, it's not a shampoo bottle now."
—Kate Winslet, holding the Oscar she won as best actress in "The Reader."

"My kids are too old to remember this now, but when they were much younger, I swore to them that if this miracle ever happened that I would recede into the character of Tigger from Winnie the Pooh."
—Danny Boyle, jumping up and down, after winning the best director Academy Award for "Slumdog Millionaire."

"This award tonight would have humbly validated Heath's quiet determination to be truly accepted by you all here—his peers within an industry he so loved."
—Heath Ledger's father, Kim Ledger, accepting the award for best supporting actor on behalf of his son.

"When I was 13 years old my beautiful mother and my father moved me from a conservative Mormon home in San Antonio, Texas, to California, and I heard the story of Harvey Milk and it gave me hope. It gave me the hope to live my life."
—Dustin Black, accepting best original screenplay Oscar.

"It's not going to be 45 seconds, I can say that right now. Has anybody ever fainted here? Because I might be the first one."
—Penelope Cruz, accepting the best supporting actress award.

"Fifteen career Oscar nominations. That's a record. I hate to say it but when someone puts up numbers like that, it's just hard not to think steroids."
—Host Hugh Jackman to Meryl Streep during the opening of the show.

"There are certain places in the universe you never imagine standing. For me, it's the moon, the South Pole, the Miss World podium and here."
—Simon Beaufoy on-stage after winning best adapted screenplay for "Slumdog Millionaire."

"Now listen, I want you to relax tonight. I want you to say whatever is on your mind because you know we have a seven-second delay, but if you win, we switch to a 20-minute delay."
—Host Hugh Jackman to Mickey Rourke during the opening of the show.

"This award touches my heart and the very depth of my soul because of who the award is from and those who will benefit. The humility I feel is staggering, and I know it will stay with me for the rest of my life."
—Jerry Lewis, while accepting an Oscar for humanitarian work.

From slums of Mumbai to the Academy Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The youngest stars of "Slumdog Millionaire" bubbled over with smiles and enthusiasm on the red carpet at the Oscars, and the crowd reflected it all back.

Two of the six actors completed their improbable journey from the slums of Mumbai, India, to the world's most dazzling awards show. All of them looked as polished in front of the assembled throng of media as Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt.

The two youngest were plucked from the slums by director Danny Boyle to star in the rags-to-riches tale of a slum kid who makes it big. The film was nominated for 10 Oscars, and was an early winner for adapted screenplay and cinematography.

"It's fantastic. It's beyond our dreams," said Tanvi Ganesh Lonkar, who played the "middle" age protagonist Jamal, as he glanced around at the gaggle of famous faces jamming the long red carpet outside Hollywood's Kodak Theatre.

Lonkar is one of the six actors who play the three lead characters in three stages of their lives. The group chattered happily away to reporters sticking microphones and cameras in their smiling faces.

Asked by one to show off their dance moves, they eagerly complied, with Tanay Hemant Chheda proclaiming, "All Indians can dance."

Four of the six speak English, and they frequently talked over each other, but all agreed they want to be in more movies.

Lonkar admitted she hoped to meet Tom Cruise and tell him, "Hi, I'm you're biggest fan."

Rubina Ali, a 9-year-old who played the young Latika, lives in the slums, along with her 10-year-old neighbor and co-star Azharuddin Ismail. He'd never been on a plane or traveled outside India until his trip to Hollywood.

Ali wore a pale blue short dress and white ballet flats, with henna decorating her arms and staining her fingernails. The boys wore child-size tuxedos and Lonkar wore a pale mauve dress.

For Rubina and Azhar, there was a frenzied scramble this week to get visas, passports and tickets after their parents decided at the last minute they wanted them to attend the ceremony. Everything came through Thursday, and on Friday they were cruising Mumbai in an air-conditioned SUV, doing last-minute shopping and getting advice.

Bringing the youngsters to America was a concern of the film's behind-the-scenes adults, including adapted screenplay winner Simon Beaufoy.

AP

Actor Sir Ben Kingsley, right watches as cast members of the film "Slumdog Millionaire" arrive for the 81st Academy Awards Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

"We were so worried about bringing them over in case it seemed at all inappropriate because it's the most lavish awards ceremony," he said backstage. "They're completely cool about it. We were worried and they're all running around having a laugh about it. It was absolutely the right thing to do to bring them over.

The film's adult co-stars, 18-year-old Dev Patel and 24-year-old Freida Pinto, got a kick out of seeing the kids receive the star treatment.

"While me and Freida have been hogging everything, these kids are big stars," Patel said. "This is some of the appreciation they deserve."

Director Boyle was grateful the youngsters were allowed to attend the show.

"It's everything. It's the real climax to it," he said. "For us to see them here has just made it all worthwhile."

Also part of the group was Ayush Mahesh Khedekar, who plays the youngest Jamal and lives in India, but did not grow up in the slums, and Ashutosh Lobo Gajiwala, who plays the middle Salim.

In the crowded lanes of the Mumbai slums, small crowds gathered around every television set and "Jai Ho," one of the film's popular songs, was heard ringing out.

In the tiny, bubble-gum pink shack that is Ali's home, her mother Munni Qureshi watched the awards on TV as her three other children slept on the floor next to her. The single room, barely big enough to hold three adults, was crowded with dozens of television cameras and reporters.

Outside people bathed, women collected trash and stray dogs fought.

"I had never imagined that such a thing would happen. It's a very proud moment for me. If she wins we hope some changes will come," Qureshi said.

She said she had spoken to her daughter and she was very excited.

"We're all very happy. It seems like happiness is falling from the sky," said Sohail Qureshi, a neighbor who said he had seen Rubina grow up.

"She's like a daughter to me."

Romance blooms and heels break at the Oscars

By SANDY COHEN
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—We may not have even noticed, but Amanda Seyfried did when she briefly caught her heel in a stocking during that elaborate song-and-dance number she did with Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens and other young stars at Sunday's Oscars.

"I would feel a lot better if I hadn't," the disappointed "Mamma Mia!" co-star said as she came offstage. Efron, however, made light of the moment.

"We'll never be invited back," he joked.

Turns out the "High School Musical" star had a little wardrobe malfunction of his own. His microphone had gotten tangled in his bow tie, and Hudgens had to untangle him when they got offstage.

■ ■ ■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Overall, it was a "heelacious" night at the Oscars.

First Amanda Seyfried got a heel of her shoe caught in a stocking during a song-and-dance number. Then Alicia Keys broke a heel as she ran from the green room to the stage to make an Oscar presentation with Zac Efron.

Fortunately Keys was wearing a long dress and no one seemed to notice when she breezed onto the stage with one leg shorter than the other.

■ ■ ■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Oscars aren't all about winning.

AP

Jennifer Aniston, left, and John Mayer arrive at the 81st Academy Awards Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

They're also about romance, as in Jennifer Aniston overheard backstage whispering into John Mayer's ear, "I really love you, every part of you."

The couple arrived at the backdoor entrance to the Kodak Theatre shortly before the show began. Perhaps indicating why they hadn't gotten there earlier, Mayer joked that it took Aniston three hours longer to get ready than him.

As the couple stood hand-in-hand, pre-show chaos unfolded all around them. At one point Ben Stiller sprinted by. A moment later, two crates filled with Oscars for the night's winners were carried toward the stage.

"Wow!" Aniston exclaimed. "Do we have to stand and salute?"

■ ■ ■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A relaxed Jerry Lewis joked with photographers backstage before accepting Oscar's annual Jean Hersholt award for his humanitarian work.

But Lewis' presenter, fellow comedian Eddie Murphy, was silent, apparently concentrating on what he would say about the man he called one of his inspirations.

Afterward both men were all smiles.

As Murphy chatted with singer John Legend, Lewis climbed into a waiting wheelchair.

"It's so good to get old," the 82-year-old comic joked.

■ ■ ■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Not every star who arrives at the Oscars strolls along the red carpet out front to the applause of thousands of star-struck fans. Some like to sneak in the back.

"It's so much nicer. No one's screaming," Goldie Hawn said as she arrived at a loading dock about 45 minutes before Sunday's Oscar show and slipped through a door that led directly to the Kodak Theatre's green room. Hawn, a best supporting actress winner in 1970, was accompanied by longtime beau Kurt Russell.

Although the show's producers kept a tight lid on who would be handing out awards during the show, word leaked out that a number of presenters and performers used the back way in to keep people watching at home in suspense.

And while low-key, the back door provided an entrance not entirely without glamour. Although the loading dock was filled with construction equipment, there was also a small patch of red carpet where stars posed very briefly for a handful of photographers. The entrance was framed by a pair of Oscar statues.

Among those taking that route to the theater were Tina Fey, Christopher Walken, Shirley MacLaine, Adrien Brody, Steven Spielberg and Steve Martin. Brody brought his father while Spielberg was accompanied by his daughter.

"I should find makeup," Martin said as he walked inside.

■ ■ ■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Didn't Hugh Jackman look relaxed onstage, playing David Frost to Anne Hathaway's Richard Nixon during his opening comedy bit as host of the 81st annual Academy Awards?

Don't let him fool you.

With three minutes to showtime, Jackman was backstage trying to shake off pre-show jitters by high-fiving a backstage worker and wishing everyone a great show.

"You're the best," Oscar producer Laurence Mark reassured him.

"I want to be the underdog," Jackman replied.

Then the curtain went up and it was showtime.

■ ■ ■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—James Bond—check that, his alter ego Daniel Craig—looked as cool as 007 as he prepared to take the stage as a presenter at Sunday's Academy Awards.

Not so his co-presenter, Sarah Jessica Parker.

"I have my purse," Parker said with an embarrassed grin as she realized she was still holding the small silver bag. She quickly placed it by a television monitor.

As a stage manager held a flashlight, Craig had some last-minute powder applied to his face. Parker did her own powdering. then got a good-luck hug from show producer Laurence Mark.

"God, I hope I don't blow it," she said before heading to the stage.

■ ■ ■

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jennifer Aniston and Jack Black were busy rehearsing their lines for their Oscar presentations when they heard Dustin Lance Black's name called as the Oscar winner for best original screenplay for the film "Milk."

Both burst into applause.

Then it was back to work, with Black reassuring Aniston there was nothing wrong with presenting two awards back-to-back in the animation category. He pointed out that Steve Martin and Tina Fey were onstage at the moment presenting two screenplay awards.

"See, they're doing two too. They're all doing two. It's not just us," he said.

Stars give the Oscars the one-shoulder treatment

By SAMANTHA CRITCHELL
AP FASHION WRITER

The big guns—Angelina Jolie, Kate Winslet and Sean Penn among them—went with black at Sunday's Academy Awards, but light colors and asymmetrical gowns topped the broader fashion trends.

Jolie and Brad Pitt looked very much the part of the red carpet's golden couple at the Kodak Theatre in classic, almost retro, styles. She wore a black sweetheart-neck strapless gown by Elie Saab, accessorized with green drop earrings, and he wore a classic bow tie.

Penn, in Giorgio Armani, also perfectly matched his wife, Robin Wright Penn. Vanessa Hudgens, in a black Marchesa gown with black and white tulle flowers on the bodice and dangling platinum, diamond and vintage coral earrings by Cathy Waterman, and Zac Efron, in Dolce & Gabanna, were the next-generation supercouple.

Winslet also went with dark and sophisticated in a gray satin and black tulle dress by Atelier Yves Saint Laurent by Stefano Pilati. She looked "flawless," said stylist Mary Alice Stephenson. "Everything is right!"

But Jolie, Stephenson added, was disappointing. "Angelina Jolie is always beautiful but boring and ho-hum in that black dress. It is just too drab, dour and depressing for the Oscars. I really hoped she would step it up and have some fun with color and take a chance with wearing something unexpected."

Leading the charge of light colors was Mickey Rourke in his Jean Paul Gaultier suit without a tie.

Anne Hathaway sparkled in a strapless champagne-colored Armani Prive gown covered in crystals and circular pailettes with a jeweled dragon brooch on the back. Evan Rachel Wood was in a strapless ivory-tone number by Saab, and Jessica Biel was in a sleek Prada strapless column gown in shiny white satin with a bow detail on the front.

Penelope Cruz wore a white 1950s Balmain gown, with a strapless neckline and hand-embroidery with gold treads, she got from top vintage curator Rita Watnick's Lily et Cie. Miley Cyrus' beaded Zuhair Murad dress was mostly white but had tiers of midnight-blue beaded petals.

AP

Brad Pitt, nominated for an Oscar for best actor in a leading role for his work in "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," and Angelina Jolie arrive for the 81st Academy Awards Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

"She looked old Hollywood," observed Suze Yalof Schwartz, executive fashion editor at large for Glamour magazine. "It looked like something from the '40s - and it was on the youngest person there."

"I couldn't believe how much white there was," added designer Pamella Roland. "Most times we're told that actresses want color ... but I also was amazed how glamorous everyone was."

Alberta Ferretti put Meryl Streep in a light gray empire-waisted gown for one of Streep's most stylish turns at the Oscars - which she so often frequents.

Marisa Tomei's one-shoulder, dove-gray gown by Versace was covered with dramatic fan pleats.

Taraji P. Henson made her big style statement with an oversized 19th-century diamond flower necklace by Fred Leighton, paired with a cream-colored strapless dress with uneven tiers of fabric and a train by Roberto Cavalli.

"Taraji Henson knocked it out of the park," said Lisa Rinna, fashion commentator for TV Guide Network. "She and all the other nominees really looked like nominees."

Rinna noted, however, that from her perch she saw fewer stars than she had expected. It was a tactic to keep some stars off the red carpet so they'd be a surprise during the ceremony. Jennifer Aniston and Tina Fey were among those kept under wraps until the telecast.

Amy Adams stood out thanks to her chunky Leighton neck-lace—0a colored gemstone and diamond bib from the 1950s—complementing a crimson bustier dress with black spider web-piping by Carolina Herrera.

"Even though we're in a recession, I've never seen as many luxurious fabrics on the red carpet, and the jewelry—the bling—is bigger than ever," Schwartz said.

Heidi Klum designed the ruby red-dress charm on one of her funky bracelets that fit the vibe of her fashion-forward asymmetrical Roland Mouret gown with a high slit that showed off her model figure. The charm aims to raise awareness about heart disease.

Fashion star Sarah Jessica Parker wore a light green strapless gown by Dior Couture with gold waves decorating the bodice, and Natalie Portman had flashes of gold beading on her orchid strapless gown by Rodarte.

Beyonce's body-hugging black gown was also jazzed up with gold floral embroidery, and Queen Latifah's navy one-shoulder gown by Georges Chakra was dotted with crystals.

In full-on gold lame was Viola Davis in a Reem Acra gown with a plunging V-neck. Melissa Leo wore a copper-colored chiffon gown with ruching and beading by Badgley Mischka.

Freida Pinto provided a pop of electricity in a beaded blue John Galliano gown with one bejeweled lace sleeve.

Her pint-sized "Slumdog Millionaire" co-stars wore custom-made outfits by Brooks Brothers.

AP

Actress Penelope Cruz, nominated for an Oscar for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her work in "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," arrives for the 81st Academy Awards Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

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Mon and Tues 4:05 7:25
Elizabeth Banks, David Strathairn
Horror, Remake • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
A deadly battle of wills begins when Anna returns from a psychiatric facility and investigates the circumstances surrounding her mother's suspicious and untimely death. While Anna recuperates from the tragedy, her father becomes engaged to Rachel, her mother's former nurse, and moves her into their home. Anna's dismay quickly turns to horror when she is visited by her mother's ghost—crying out for revenge and pointing an accusing finger at Rachel.

Defiance
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:45
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon and Tues 4:00 7:00
Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber
Action, Drama, War • Rated R
Synopsis
The year is 1941 and the Jews of Eastern Europe are being massacred by the thousands. Managing to escape certain death, three brothers take refuge in the dense surrounding woods they have known since childhood. There they begin their desperate battle against the Nazis. At first it is all they can do to stay alive. But gradually, as whispers of their daring spreads, they begin to attract others—men and women, young and old—willing to risk everything for the sake of even a moment's freedom.

★ ★ ★

Friday The 13th
Friday 4:20 7:05 10:00
Saturday 1:05 4:20 7:05 10:00
Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:05
Mon and Tues 4:20 7:05
Jared Padalecki, Amanda Righetti
Horror, Remake • Rated R
Synopsis
Clay searches for his missing sister in the eerie woods of legendary Crystal Lake, where he stumbles on the creaky remains of rotting old cabins behind moss-covered trees. And that's not the only thing lying in wait under the brush. Against the advice of police and cautions from the locals, Clay pursues what few leads he has, with the help of a young woman he meets among a group of college kids up for an all-thrills weekend.

Pink Panther 2
Friday 4:10 7:10 9:30
Saturday 1:15 4:10 7:10 9:30
Sunday 1:15 4:10 7:10
Mon and Tues 4:10 7:10
Steve Martin, Andy Garcia
Comedy, Mystery • Rated PG

Push
Friday 4:15 7:30 9:40
Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:40
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30
Mon and Tues 4:15 7:30
Chris Evans, Dakota Fanning
Thriller Supernatural • Rated PG 13

Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat
Friday 4:25 7:20 9:50
Saturday 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50
Sunday 1:30 4:25 7:20
Mon and Tues 4:25 7:20
Ai-Ai de las Alas, Eugene Domingo
Comedy • Rated PG

Taken
Friday 4:30 7:15 9:55
Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15
Mon and Tues 4:30 7:15
Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace
Action, Drama, Thriller • Rated PG 13

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Winslet wins best actress for 'Reader'

NEW YORK (AP)—Kate Winslet pulled off the expected Sunday night, winning the Academy Award for best actress for her quietly powerful performance in "The Reader."

Winslet was giddy and emotional as she accepted her trophy.

"I'd be lying if I haven't made a version of this speech before," she said. "I think I was probably 8 years old and staring into the bathroom mirror and this (Oscar) would be a shampoo bottle. But it's not a shampoo bottle now."

She thanked her husband, director Sam Mendes, and their two children. And she also thanked her father, saying "Dad, whistle or something 'cause then I'll know where you are." He whistled back from his seat at the Kodak Theatre.

"You just don't think that these dreams that seem so silly and so impossible could ever really come true," Winslet said backstage.

This is the first Oscar for Winslet, who's been nominated five other times for her roles in "Titanic," "Sense and Sensibility," "Iris," "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and "Little Children."

AP

British actress Kate Winslet accepts the Oscar for best actress for her work in "The Reader" during the 81st Academy Awards Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

But the British actress seemed a shoo-in to win this year: She gained Oscar momentum after snagging a best supporting actress award at the Golden Globes for her role as a former Nazi camp guard in "The Reader," as well as best dramatic actress for her role as an unhappy housewife in "Revolutionary Road."

Winslet, 33, received more recognition on the awards circuit for "The Reader." Her portrayal of Hanna Schmitz—a woman having a passionate affair with a teenager who encounters her again years later while she is on trial for Holocaust crimes—was raw and restrained, netting her additional trophies at the Screen Actors Guild Awards and British Film Academy Awards.

The best-actress category was loaded with strong contenders: Meryl Streep was another front-runner with her 15th acting nomination as a prickly nun in "Doubt." Anne Hathaway played against her wholesome image as a toxic narcissist who leaves rehab to wreak havoc on her sister's wedding in "Rachel Getting Married." Angelina Jolie dug deep to portray a mother of a missing child in "Changeling." And Melissa Leo was powerful as mom who forges an unlikely friendship in "Frozen River."

Oscars host Hugh Jackman gave the job his all

NEW YORK (AP)—Don't blame Hugh Jackman.

This versatile performer clearly showed up for the Oscars prepared to put his all into the hosting job.

He was a solid choice to help bring needed new life to what's all-too-routinely billed as "Hollywood's biggest night."

As an actor, movie star, song-and-dance man and People magazine's "Sexiest Man Alive" (among other credentials), Jackman would seem to be capable of most anything.

Maybe he'd even be willing to try fixing the economy.

At any rate, the sorry state of the economy flavored Jackman's opening performance.

"Due to cutbacks, the Academy said they didn't have enough money for an opening number," Jackman declared. "I'm going to do one anyway."

And he did, with a musical tribute to the year's nominated films cleverly staged with tatty, bargain-basement props (and help from Anne Hathaway, summoned from her seat in the audience).

Then, charmingly, Jackman greeted and kidded many of the nominated stars in the hall.

After saying hello to Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, Jackman admitted "I actually don't have a joke for them, I'm just contractually obligated to mention them at least five times during the show. That's once."

No knee slappers here, but when it's Hugh Jackman voicing them, who cares? The key word: charm.

But he's only human. And he's only one man.

Less than 12 minutes into the broadcast, he stepped away. After a curtain miscue and some disjointed film clips, the Best Supporting Actress Oscar was presented. By not one, or two, presenters—but by five past winners. A nice gesture, but a talky, overpopulated way to get on with the necessary business.

It was an early warning signal. Was this the best the revamped Oscars could do?

AP

Oscar host Hugh Jackman performs with Beyonce during the 81st Academy Awards Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

Comedy dream team Tina Fey and Steve Martin picked up the pace a bit, presenting Best Original and Adapted Screenplays. (At one point, Martin departed from his boilerplate setup to turn to Fey: "Don't fall in love with me," he cautioned her.)

Jennifer Aniston and Jack Black came next, slowing things down again to announce the Best Animated Feature and Best Animated Short Film.

Gee, this was starting to feel overly familiar. Which is to say labored, self-reverential and disappointing.

Along with Jackman presiding, this year's Oscarcast was supposed to be stylistically new and invigorated. In a year when Oscar winners seemed more predictable than usual, the night's suspense for many viewers had been diverted to wondering whether the broadcast itself would successfully deliver a few welcome surprises.

But what passed for surprises was an overformatted style that seemed to turn the night into a Learning Annex short course in how movies are made.

One amusing segment: A filmed bit with Seth Rogen and James Franco in their "Pineapple Express" personas, settling on their couch to watch bootlegged copies of some of the year's favorite features (including a few that the Academy pointedly ignored).

As was widely expected, the late Heath Ledger was honored as the Best Supporting Actor. That announcement, and the standing ovation it inspired in the hall, were moving nonetheless.

The much-anticipated tribute to Jerry Lewis was mostly notable for the brevity of his acceptance remarks.

Midway through the broadcast, Jackman, in top hat and tails, decreed that the success of "Mamma Mia" proves movie musicals are back. With that, he launched into an old-fashioned production number drawing on classic movie musicals with the able assistance of Beyonce and other stars, and an enormous dance troupe.

But like too much of the evening, it was tightly, um, choreographed.

By contrast, the night's crowning moment—actually, just a couple of seconds—was thanks to Philippe Petit, the tightrope-walking subject of Best Documentary-winning "Man on Wire." He not only gave his thanks for the Oscar but balanced the statuette on his chin.

If only the rest of the Oscarcast could have struck that kind of balance.

How top Oscar winners fared at the box office

MOVIE: "Slumdog Millionaire," Fox Searchlight.
OSCARS: Eight, including best picture and director.
RELEASED: November.
BOX OFFICE: $98 million so far.

■ ■ ■

MOVIE: "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," Paramount Pictures.
OSCARS: Three, including best art direction and visual effects.
RELEASED: December.
BOX OFFICE: $124.2 million so far

■ ■ ■

MOVIE: "Milk," Focus Features.
OSCARS: Two, including best actor and original screenplay.
RELEASED: November.
BOX OFFICE: $28.2 million so far.

■ ■ ■

MOVIE: "The Dark Knight," Warner Bros.
OSCARS: Two, including best supporting actor and sound editing.
RELEASED: July.
BOX OFFICE: $533 million so far.

Reluctant mentor will miss chance to help troubled boy

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: Your answer to "Solo in Florida" (Dec. 26) saddened me. The writer, a confirmed bachelor, wrote about not wanting to be a role model for a 14-year-boy, "Kyle," who became attached to him at church.

While I agree that the boy's parents have placed an unfair burden on this man, I'm sorry you didn't remind him how few people have the chance to positively impact the lives of others, particularly the lives of young children. Although "Solo" does not intend to have children of his own, he does have a chance to pass on something of equal value—his wisdom and life experience.

Please remind "Solo" a bachelor is still a member of a community, and it takes a village to raise a child.

HUMANIST IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

DEAR HUMANIST: Your point is well stated, and many readers agreed with you. However, "Solo in Florida" said he loves his freedom, has no desire to be a mentor, and may not possess the temperament to be one. While it is clear that "Kyle" is lacking something in his life, it is not Solo's responsibility to provide it. And Kyle's parents should not be pressing him into service. Read on:

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My son fits "Kyle's" description. He is intelligent, articulate, has few friends and looks to adults in our community for conversation and friendship. I'm sure he has annoyed more than one person at church, school or in other activities.

My son has Asperger's syndrome, a high-functioning form of autism. As a rule, individuals with Asperger's are very literal and lack the ability to read vocal inflections, body language and gestures. They frequently misinterpret conversations and situations.

If a diagnosis proves my hunch, Kyle's family should look to someone who works with individuals with autism who can teach him the tools he needs to communicate with others—including "Solo"—without violating social boundaries. Everyone will be happier for the effort.

MOM OF ASPIES IN MINNESOTA

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: It is possible that Kyle may be dealing with gay issues. Quite often, and especially in families involved in church, there are few if any role models for a teen who thinks he (or she) is gay. It may be that this man's kindness and the fact that he is unattached would make him the closest candidate for a role model.

CURTIS IN NORTH CAROLINA

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Because Kyle's mother is asking "Solo" to share meals with them in an effort to "control" the boy, she seems to feel that this approach has merit. Solo could tell her that while he is honored her son has chosen him as a mentor, he does not wish to take on that commitment, and suggest that she contact Big Brothers to find someone who does.

JANE IN MESA, ARIZ.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Perhaps "Solo in Florida" should become a little less "solo" at church a few times. If he arranged to arrive with and sit between or among some other adults there, he might be able to put a little distance between himself and the boy.

GRAMMY IN HAWAII

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Male teens who behave like Kyle often suffer from depression, undiagnosed ADD/ADHD and may be at risk for drug abuse or suicide. Involving the spiritual adviser is a good first step in helping the boy. Kyle needs a psychiatric evaluation, the family needs counseling, and his parents could benefit from some parenting classes.

ADVOCATE IN GARDEN GROVE, CALIF.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Just a few words and a friendly smile can often do far more than one can ever imagine for a person who seems starved for attention. Even if "Solo" doesn't do anything to help that boy, I hope he at least will NOT do anything to offend or hurt him.

DELAWARE READER

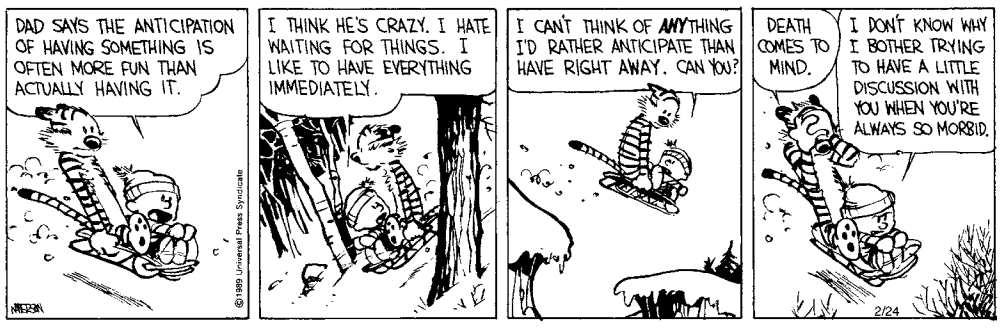
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


DAD SAYS THE ANTICIPATION OF HAVING SOMETHING IS OFTEN MORE FUN THAN ACTUALLY HAVING IT.
I THINK HE'S CRAZY. I HATE WAITING FOR THINGS. I LIKE TO HAVE EVERYTHING IMMEDIATELY.
I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING I'D RATHER ANTICIPATE THAN HAVE RIGHT AWAY. CAN YOU?
DEATH COMES TO MIND.
I DON'T KNOW WHY I BOTHER TRYING TO HAVE A LITTLE DISCUSSION WITH YOU WHEN YOU'RE ALWAYS SO MORBID.
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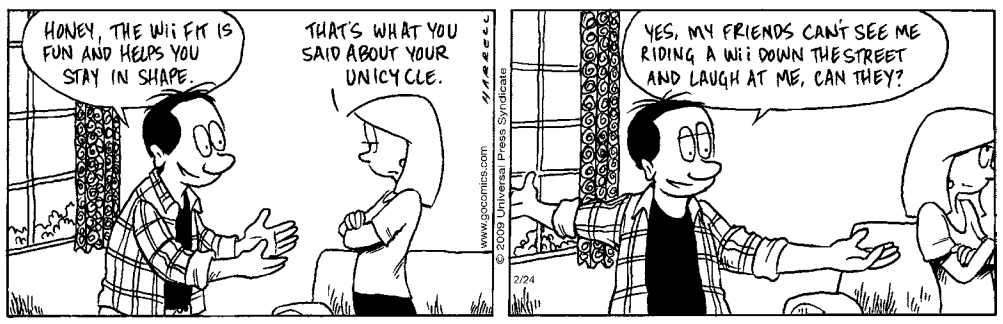
2/24

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


HONEY, THE Wii FIT IS FUN AND HELPS YOU STAY IN SHAPE.
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT YOUR UNICYCLE.
YES, MY FRIENDS CAN'T SEE ME RIDING A Wii DOWN THE STREET AND LAUGH AT ME, CAN THEY?
www.gocomics.com
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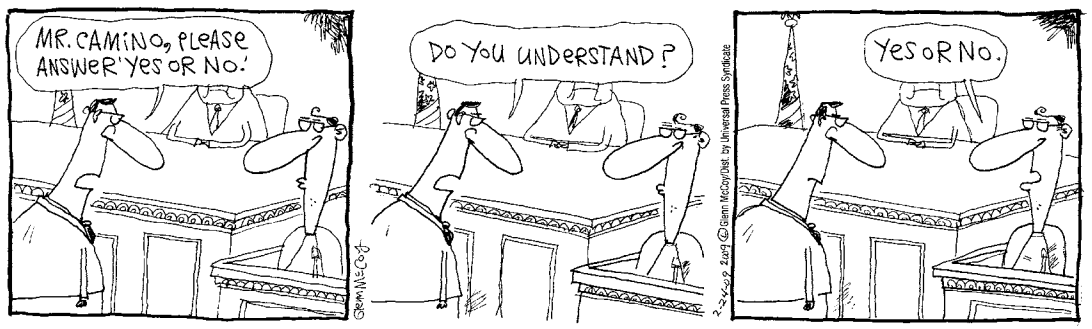
The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


MR. CAMINO, PLEASE ANSWER YES OR NO.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES OR NO.
Glenn McCoy
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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

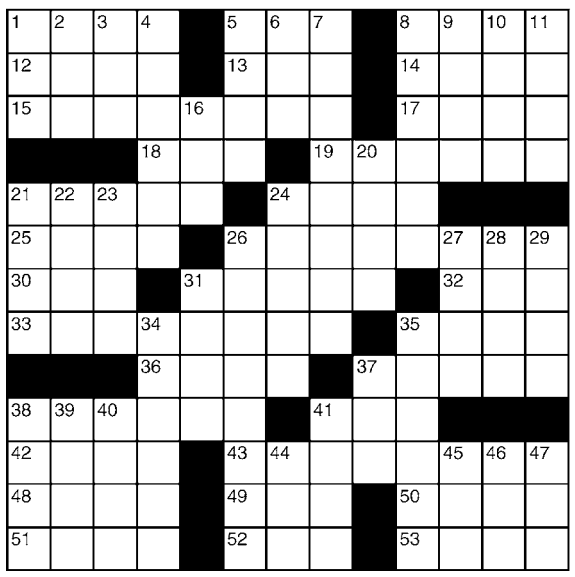
ACROSS
1 Ms. Moore
5 Occupation, for short
8 Stitches
12 With 13-Across, hematite
13 See 12-Across
14 Met melody
15 Breadwinner
17 Chain component
18 Whatever number
19 Vitamin C source
21 "Surprise Symphony" composer
24 Throat clearer
25 Lotion additive
26 TV crime drama
30 Put into words
31 J.C. Harris' "Uncle —"
32 "Hail, Caesar!"
33 Don King, e.g.
35 Faucet problem
36 Sleeping
37 Daily trio
38 One taking great interest in his work?
41 Cushion
42 Picard predecessor
43 Max Bialystock, for one
48 Advantage
49 Sailor's assent
50 "Arrivederci"
51 Crystal gazer
52 Trawler gear
53 Deserve

DOWN
1 Party bowlful
2 Screw up
3 Cattle call?
4 Encroach upon
5 Corpse
6 Anger
7 Crucial time
8 Hero material
9 "— Brockovich"
10 Airplane part
11 Benefit
16 Hostel
20 Umps
21 Padlocked fastener
22 Re 10-Down
23 Vacillate
24 Ready for battle
26 Mary Martin role
27 Zhivago's love
28 Satanic
29 Agents, briefly
31 Judicial garb
34 IOU
35 Figure out
37 Angry
38 Guitars' kin
39 Faction
40 Incite
41 Versifier
44 "Catcher in the —"
45 KGB counterpart
46 Listening device
47 Director Howard

Solution time: 21 mins.

O	N	E	■	P	I	P	E	S	■	T	H	E
F	O	R	■	A	M	O	R	T	■	R	O	W
T	R	A	N	S	P	I	R	E	■	A	P	E
■	■	■	U	S	A	■	O	P	E	N	E	R
C	O	T	T	O	N	■	R	O	D	S	■	■
O	R	R	■	N	E	W	■	N	A	V	A	L
R	E	A	P	■	L	A	W	■	M	A	X	I
N	O	N	O	S	■	D	O	T	■	A	L	L
■	■	S	U	M	S	■	M	O	T	L	E	Y
T	A	C	T	I	C	■	A	R	I	■	■	■
A	C	E	■	T	R	A	N	S	L	A	T	E
U	R	N	■	H	E	L	L	O	■	L	E	A
T	E	D	■	S	W	A	Y	S	■	P	A	T

Yesterday's answer 2-24



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Billy Zane, 43; Eddie Murray, 53; Helen Shaver, 58; Edward James Olmos, 62

Happy Birthday: It's up to you to have the vision and turn it into a viable resource this year. An exciting and educational time will unfold if you use your Pisces charm to get involved in business and personal relationships, with people who can add to your plans. It's up to you to initiate and move forward. Your numbers are 6, 13, 15, 24, 28, 35, 40

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Keep searching for the right group or person who actually gets what you are trying to accomplish. Otherwise, go it alone. Reunite with someone who has meant a lot to you in the past. Good things will result if you talk openly. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Empty promises can lead to a bad decision. Make sure that you have something concrete to work with before you get started. Emotional connections with someone you have a give-and-take relationship with can be relied on to help you out now. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Someone may try to pull a fast maneuver on you. Love is in the picture and something will develop rapidly between you and a very special individual. Past and present will cross paths. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): A change at work or within your professional field will benefit you long-term. Serious aggressive action will pay off. Avoid anyone involved in an unusual lifestyle that might influence your current status or financial position. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Take the steps required to turn an old or new relationship into something special. Love and romance are in the stars. Focus on both business and personal partnerships. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Love and money will somehow come together for you today. Expect help financially, legally or where a settlement is due. Emotional issues can help you realize how you feel about some of the people in your life. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Renewed feelings for someone will set you on an interesting route, influencing your lifestyle. Share your feelings and the response you get will ensure that you are doing the right thing. Honesty has never been more important. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Sticking around the old will not lead you to a brighter future. You've been in a rut for too long. It's time to live, love and be happy. Rid yourself of what is working against you. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You have some great ideas that can turn into cash as long as you don't go overboard. Someone will question your plans and, if you take the criticism seriously, you will be further ahead in the end. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Things may be swinging a little too far out of control for your liking. Don't fear change. Instead, protect your assets and

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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see where things go. Make your choices wisely but listen and observe what everyone else is doing. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Everything is looking up and the options being made available to you should not be ignored. Expressing your thoughts and ideas will attract the attention of someone who can offer you suggestions and contribute to what you want to do. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't let others confuse you with innuendoes or the signals being sent. Question the motives. It's being aware that will help you hold your ground and get what you want. Indecisive partners should be eliminated from your plans. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intelligent and charming and people gravitate to your side. You are a bit of a loner. You stand by your morals and set your own rules and regulations.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1							6
2		9			7			
	4			5	8	3		
					1	5	7	
		2		3		6		
	7	6	5					
		8	1	7			9	
			3			4		7
7							3	

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/24

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	8	3	2	4	1	9	6	7
4	2	9	3	7	6	5	8	1
1	7	6	5	8	9	4	2	3
7	1	5	9	2	8	3	4	6
2	9	8	4	6	3	7	1	5
3	6	4	1	5	7	8	9	2
9	4	1	6	3	5	2	7	8
6	5	7	8	9	2	1	3	4
8	3	2	7	1	4	6	5	9

Difficulty Level ★ 2/23

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THE LIGURIAN COAST — **Solution: 6 letters**

C	N	O	I	G	E	R	S	N	I	A	R	M	W	S
A	I	O	S	S	E	R	O	H	S	O	P	E	O	E
F	F	L	U	G	A	T	O	B	U	O	C	D	O	Z
E	A	I	B	C	O	U	N	T	R	Y	S	I	D	E
S	R	V	G	U	S	E	E	T	E	A	S	T	S	E
P	C	E	R	E	P	S	S	S	B	S	H	E	T	R
I	H	S	S	N	N	E	U	O	A	A	I	R	H	B
R	I	D	I	N	G	O	R	L	R	V	A	R	G	O
T	T	O	N	A	I	D	A	E	Y	I	O	A	I	N
S	E	I	P	R	I	V	A	R	(L)	L	N	N	S	A
D	C	I	U	G	A	S	R	R	(U)	L	A	E	A	S
N	T	X	H	G	N	E	O	E	(S)	A	O	A	L	S
A	U	E	N	W	F	C	D	T	(H)	S	L	N	P	O
L	R	A	O	S	E	C	N	I	V	O	R	P	S	L
A	E	T	R	E	E	S	A	A	G	N	E	B	L	A

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Yesterday's Answer: Snowman

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

UNIVERSE
INFERNO

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Find today's solution in this section

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
HUMAN RESOURCES

Job Vacancy Re-Announcement

Job Vacancy No. 09-007

Opening Date: 02/23/09
Closing Date: 03/06/09

LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

DUTIES: Under the overall supervision of the Laborary Manager or his/her designee, the incumbent's duties and responsibilities are as follows. Collects field samples at various stations and checkpoints for water and wastewater operations. Performs routine analysis on samples to ensure samples meet chemistry or microbiological parameters as determined by the EPA. Mixes media for chemistry titration analysis; calculates chemical reagent standardizations for chemical titration results. Cleans laboratory to include washing glassware and other laboratory materials. Maintains records of laboratory operations. Responds to customer or complaints from the general public. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level. SUBJECT TO PRE-EMPLOYMENT DRUG SCREENING.

LOCATION: COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION, WATER LABORATORY, SAIPAN

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION: High School diploma or equivalent and three years work experience, laboratory experienced is preferred. Knowledge of: Mathematics; Basic knowledge of chemicals; Safety procedures. Skills in: Collecting samples; Performing routine analysis; Preparing media; Following laboratory procedures; Using computers and related software applications; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. CNMI Driver's License. APPICANTS MAY BE TESTED.

Application may be picked up at the Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor or the Joeten Dandan Building or the Tinian and Rota Administration Office. Failure to provide required documents listed on the application will be grounds for disqualification.

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ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

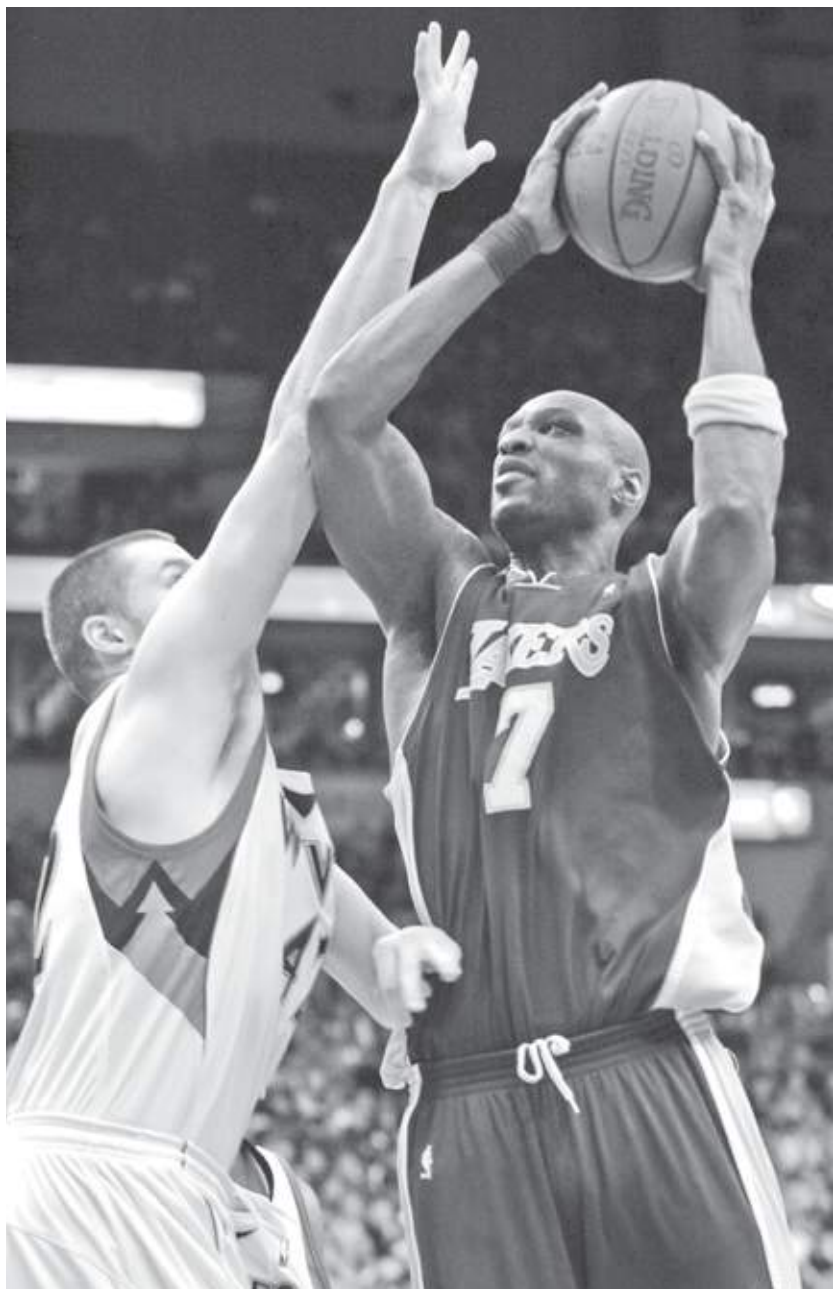
Bryant, Lakers outlast spirited Wolves

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Kobe Bryant scored 28 points to move past Elgin Baylor into 20th place on the NBA's career scoring list as the Los Angeles Lakers outlasted the Minnesota Timberwolves for a 111-108 victory Sunday.

Lamar Odom had 25 points and 14 rebounds, and Pau Gasol added 25 points for the team with the league's best record.

Ryan Gomes had 20 points and seven rebounds and Craig Smith scored 19 on 9-for-10 shooting for the Timberwolves, who committed 20 turnovers and lost their sixth straight home game.

Bryant's breakaway layin with 10:42 to play in the third quarter pushed him past the former Lakers great Baylor into third in franchise history, behind only Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Jerry West.



AP

Los Angeles Lakers forward Lamar Odom (7) shoots against Minnesota Timberwolves forward Kevin Love during the first half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in Minneapolis.

Celtics 128, Suns 108

At Phoenix, Rajon Rondo scored a career-high 32 points to go with 10 assists on his 23rd birthday as Boston beat Phoenix without Kevin Garnett.

Ray Allen scored 31 and Paul Pierce 26 in Boston's first game since Garnett went down with a strained muscle in his right knee that is expected to sidelined him for at least two weeks.

Jason Richardson scored 21 for the Suns in their first loss in four games under new coach Alvin Gentry.

Raptors 111, Knicks 100

At Toronto, Andrea Bargnani had 28 points and 10 rebounds to help Toronto beat New York two days after absorbing a 30-point loss against the Knicks.

Each of the Toronto starters reached double figures and four of the five had double-doubles. Anthony Parker scored 24 points, Shawn Marion had 16 points and 15 rebounds and Chris Bosh added 11 points and 12 boards. Jose Calderon had 13 points and 11 assists.

Al Harrington scored 31 points and David Lee had 17 points and 15 rebounds for the Knicks, who have lost nine straight games in Toronto.

Pacers 98, Bulls 91

At Indianapolis, Troy Murphy had a season-high 27 points and Indiana survived a second-half stretch of 11 minutes without a field goal to beat Chicago.

The Pacers, playing without injured leading scorers Danny Granger and Mike Dunleavy, led 69-55 midway through the third quarter but did not make another field goal until a 3-pointer by Murphy with 6:43 left in the final period.

Chicago took an 80-77 lead before Murphy's 3-pointer. There were two more ties before T.J. Ford put Indiana ahead for good with a 3.

Ben Gordon had 28 points to lead Chicago.

Magic 122, Heat 99

At Orlando, Florida, Dwight Howard had 32 points and 17 rebounds as Orlando withstood a career-high 50 points by Dwyane Wade to rout Miami.

Hedo Turkoglu had 20 points and Rafer Alston added 12 points and nine assists for the Magic, who have won 12 of the past 15 games against their Sunshine State rival.

Trail Blazers 116, Clippers 87

At Portland, Oregon, Steve Blake tied the NBA mark with 14 first-quarter assists and LaMarcus Aldridge scored 28 points as Portland rolled past Los Angeles.

Blake matched the record set by San Antonio's John Lucas during the second quarter against Denver on April 15, 1984. Blake finished with 17 assists.

Aldridge had a double-double, as he hit 13 of 20 shots from the field and grabbed 10 rebounds. Portland (35-20) pulled to within two games of first-place Denver in the Northwest Division.

Eric Gordon led Los Angeles with 21 points.

Bucks 120, Nuggets 117

At Milwaukee, Charlie Villanueva scored nine of his season-high 36 points in the fourth quarter to help Milwaukee beat Denver.

Villanueva tied his career high with seven 3-pointers, and Ramon Sessions added 27 points for the Bucks.

Carmelo Anthony scored 33 points and Chauncey Billups added 21 for the Nuggets who ended a season-high eight-game road trip with a 5-3 mark.

Rockets 99, Bobcats 78

At Houston, Ron Artest scored 26 points, Yao Ming added 19 points and seven rebounds and Houston beat Charlotte in another win without Tracy McGrady.

Luis Scola had 12 points and 10 rebounds and Shane Battier sank three 3-pointers for the Rockets, who've won four straight games and eight of the last nine McGrady has missed with a sore left knee. McGrady announced Wednesday that he'll have season-ending surgery, but Houston is 15-6 without him this season.

Raymond Felton, Boris Diaw and Emeka Okafor scored 13 points apiece for the Bobcats.

Cavaliers 99, Pistons 78

At Cleveland, Delonte West scored 25 points in his first game since mid-January and LeBron James added 20, leading Cleveland over Detroit.

West, sidelined since Jan. 15 with a fractured right wrist, was 8-of-11 from the field and made all five of his 3-point attempts. He scored 13 points in the first quarter when the Cavaliers put the game away against the sluggish Pistons, who have lost six straight for the first time since February 2004, and fell to 27-27.

James, who scored 55 points Friday night against Milwaukee, played just 31 minutes, added nine assists and five rebounds.

Allen Iverson scored 14 points for the Pistons, who have lost 15 of 20.

Charges in deaths of Curry's ex-girlfriend, baby

CHICAGO (AP)—A 36-year-old attorney fatally shot the former girlfriend and infant daughter of New York Knicks player Eddy Curry during a domestic-related dispute, according to police and published reports.

Fredrick Goings of Chicago was charged Sunday with two counts of first-degree murder, Cook County State's Attorney spokeswoman Sally Daly said.

Police said Goings was arrested Friday evening as he was getting into his car outside a relative's place in Chicago. Goings has not made any statements to authorities and is not cooperating in the investigation, Lt. Denis Walsh said.

It was not immediately clear who was representing Goings. A message left at his Chicago law office Sunday was not returned. Goings was due in bond court on Monday.

The bodies of 24-year-old Nova Henry and her 9-month-old daughter, Ava, were found in their Chicago apartment on Jan. 24. Both died of multiple gunshot wounds.

Henry also was the mother of ex-Chicago Bulls player Curry's 3-year-old son, who was found unharmed at the scene.

Court records show that Goings was Henry's attorney in a paternity case with Curry involving Ava.

According to the Chicago Tribune, records show that DNA tests confirmed Ava was Curry's daughter. Curry, through Knicks spokesman Jonathan Supranowitz, declined comment. Messages left Sunday for his attorney were not immediately returned.

Police said Goings and Henry had "a relationship" and the motive for the shooting was "domestic related" but declined to elaborate.

According to police, Nova Henry let Goings into the apartment on Jan. 24 and the two quarreled.

"What happened inside that apartment will have to come out at a later date," Walsh told reporters Sunday. "There obviously was an argument."

Police said surveillance images and other evidence linked Goings to the case, but authorities declined to give details.

Goings has been practicing law since April 2005, according to state records.

Kevin Gregg, Carlos Marmol battling for closer role with Cubs

MESA, Ariz. (AP)—Kevin Gregg wants to close. He's done it before. So does Carlos Marmol, whose stellar work as a setup man has earned him a shot at the marquee spot in the Chicago Cubs' bullpen.

"Sure, why not? Everyone wants to be a closer. That's what I like," Marmol said.

Gregg and Marmol are competing this spring to replace Kerry Wood, whose decade-long run with the Cubs is over after a final season as a top closer.

So, will it be Marmol or Gregg? Gregg or Marmol?

"We'll do what is best for the team to win games, no matter what," pitching coach Larry Rothschild said Sunday. "I think Kevin is capable of pitching more than one inning at a time, also. I think both of them can do it."

Marmol carved out a role as a top setup man in 2007 when he made 59 appearances after being called up in May, going 5-1 with a 1.43 ERA. Last year he was 2-4 with a 2.68 ERA in 82 appearances and became one of the NL's best setup relievers.

Gregg came to Chicago from the Florida Marlins in a November trade that signaled the end of Wood's time with the Cubs.

Bothered by a sore left knee, Gregg finished 7-8 with a 3.41 ERA and 29 saves last season—his nine blown saves tied for most in the majors. He compiled a 10.13 ERA in August, but it was under 2.00 every other month, including seven scoreless innings in September after he lost the closer's job. In 2007, he converted 32 of 36 save opportunities.

"I don't see it really as a competition," Gregg said. "I think we both can pitch in either role. I know he's been very successful as a setup guy and I've been successful as a closer. So where it leads to this year, we'll see what (manager) Lou (Piniella) is going to do and what he feels comfortable with.

"To me I'm just getting back in the groove of things, feeling comfortable with the knee."

Marmol was still undecided early Sunday on whether he'll pitch for the Dominican Republic in the World Baseball Classic. Piniella had joked with Marmol that while he was away, Gregg would be throwing pitches at 98 mph for the Cubs.

"I think Lou is just messing around," Gregg said. "He's having a good time early in the spring. He knows what Carlos can do. He hasn't seen me on an everyday basis."

Gregg has been especially effective at Wrigley Field in his career. The 6-foot-6, 238-pound right-hander has four saves in the Cubs' home ballpark and hasn't allowed an earned run in 3 2-3 innings.

"I've played across the field from these guys for a number of years," he said. "I've given them some trouble over the last few years."

Even though the closer gets the headline, the setup man often gets outs that are just as significant.

"Sometimes that is the turning point in the game where you need that guy," Gregg said. "Getting the last three is different from getting those previous six or nine outs. ... Marmol's ability to get five or six outs, it's crazy just to watch him go out there and he dominates lefties and righties. That's one thing he's got working for him. He's resilient."

Rothschild said the decision might not come until three-quarters of the way through spring training.

Marmol said he's ready for either role and won't be upset if Gregg wins the closer job.

"I'm going to take the ball every time that they say," he said. "That's my job. It doesn't bother me. I want to (close), but they are the boss. I'm not a boss of the players."

Mickelson avoids a meltdown to win at Riviera

LOS ANGELES (AP)—On the verge of blowing the biggest lead of his career, Phil Mickelson turned his fortunes around in the final hour at Riviera with back-to-back birdies that carried him to a one-shot victory Sunday in the Northern Trust Open.

Mickelson went from a four-shot lead at the start of the final round to a two-shot deficit with three holes to play.

Determined not to get another title get away from him at Riviera, he hit 9-iron to 5 feet behind the hole for birdie on the par-3 16th, hit his biggest drive of the round on the par-5 17th to set up a two-putt birdie from 70 feet, then buried his demons on the 18th hole by making a 6-foot par to avoid a playoff with Steve Stricker.

Mickelson closed with a 1-over 72 to become only the fourth player to win in consecutive years at Riviera. It might have been three in a row if not for his sloppy bogey on the 18th hole two years ago, when he wound up losing in a playoff.

"I'll take a lot out of this," Mickelson said. "To make par on 18 when two years ago I didn't, that meant a lot to me."

Stricker closed with a 67 and was on his way to the range to get ready for a playoff when he saw Mickelson leave himself a tough par putt on the final hole, and stopped when he heard the cheer.

He had his chances. Stricker missed a 12-foot birdie putt on the par-5 17th that would have given him a three-shot lead at the time, then missed a 12-footer for par on the 18th.

It was the second time on the West Coast that Stricker had a chance to win. He had a three-shot lead at the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic until he was blown away by the raging desert wind, closing with a 77.

"It's just a little disappointing when you don't finish it off, or have the opportunity to finish it off," he said. "And I didn't."

But the real heartache belonged to Fred Couples.

A two-time winner at Riviera, his favorite golf course west of Augusta National, the 49-year-old had a chance for one last victory in his final full season on the PGA Tour. Couples was one shot behind when he fanned his approach to the 18th green and watched in disgust as it struck a eucalyptus tree. He finished with a bogey for a 69 to tie for third with K.J. Choi (69) and Andres Romero (70).

Couples learned earlier in the week that his estranged wife, Thais Baker, died Tuesday of breast cancer. They never divorced after splitting up nearly four years ago, and Couples said he is not welcome in their home in Santa Barbara.

"She was a nice person," he said. "She did everything she could to make it another month."

Mickelson finished at 15-under 269 and won for the 35th time in his career. It was the first time since the 2005 PGA Championship that he won a tournament without breaking par in the final round.

Lefty won for the 17th time on the West Coast, and it could not have come at a better time. He had failed to break the top 20 in his first three starts, missing the cut in Phoenix and making it on the number at Pebble Beach.

And while a victory should take care of any talk about a slump, this was one of his wildest wins yet - 63-72-62-72.

Mickelson had never lost a PGA Tour event when leading by more than four shots going into the final round, but what appeared to be his biggest collapse turned into a stunning recovery.

First, he began hitting 3-wood off the tee to gain some confidence. And when he unloaded a tee shot down the 15th fairway, the comeback was under way.

Mickelson led by as many as five shots when he opened with an eagle for the third straight day, although it might have been the first sign of a struggle to come. The hole was in the middle toward the back, easy to access, yet Mickelson had to make a 40-foot putt.

The next two holes were more obvious.

He had trouble with the sticky kikuya grass, muffing a chip on the second hole to make bogey, and with his driver, hooking his tee shot on the third so badly that it struck a eucalyptus tree 170 yards off the tee, leading to another bogey.

And yet, no one in the final group took advantage.

Couples opened with an eagle from 3 feet, and his wedge on the third hole checked up 3 feet from the cup. He made birdie, but it was a nervous stroke, and he badly missed a 3-foot par putt on the fourth, a 8-foot birdie on the sixth and a 6-foot birdie on the seventh.

Romero went at every flag, but couldn't make a putt unless it was for par - or bogey. The 27-year-old Argentine twice made stunning par saves, on the fifth and eighth, to stay in the hunt. But he hooked his tee shot out of bounds on the 12th, ending his hopes.

Stricker made three birdies in a four-hole stretch around the turn, with a 6-footer at No. 12 giving him the lead for the first time all week. He never had another good look at birdie until the 17th, and that was the one he badly needed to make.

"I didn't know what the lead was at the time, but I knew I had the lead," he said.

AP
Phil Mickelson holds the winners trophy during the award presentation on the 18th hole of the Northern Trust Open golf tournament at Riviera Country Club in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009.

Source: Colts' Harrison reluctant to take pay cut

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Marvin Harrison's reluctance to take a pay cut could mark the end of his career in Indianapolis.

Colts president Bill Polian told reporters Sunday at the NFL's annual scouting combine that the team was trying to rework Harrison's deal to lower the receiver's salary cap number from approximately $13.4 million, the highest number of any wide out in the NFL.

But a person familiar with the negotiations, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the team has not made an announcement, later told The Associated Press that Harrison "probably would not be interested in" reducing his base salary.

If Harrison decides against a redoing his contract, the only other options for the Colts would be to keep Harrison at his cap number or to release him.

Harrison has been one of the Colts' most identifiable players since their move to Indianapolis. He ranks No. 2 in the NFL in career receptions (1,102) and holds all of the franchise's major career and season receiving records.

He is also 36 years old, coming off one of the least productive seasons of his career - he missed all but five games in 2007—and with the Colts in a salary cap crunch, Polian may not be able to keep Harrison at his current price.

Next year's cap is expected to be $123 million.

"The new cap rules, that's not something we planned for," Polian said. "As a result, we have some issues with veterans, including Marvin. Hopefully, we'll find a way to work through that. I don't know if we will, but we hope to."

Since being drafted by the Colts in 1996, Harrison has been a model of consistency.

He's made eight Pro Bowls and won a Super Bowl ring. His 14,550 yards rank fourth on the NFL's career list and he's No. 5 with 128 TD catches. Harrison and Peyton Manning also teamed to produce the most proficient passing tandem in league history.

But Manning has increasingly thrown more passes to Reggie Wayne, who has made the last three Pro Bowls, while Anthony Gonzalez, Indy's first-round draft pick in 2007, has made a push for more playing time.

Polian and coach Jim Caldwell have repeatedly said they do not believe Harrison's skills are deteriorating.

"What I saw is a guy who is as quick as he's been, with the same hands and he has the ability he's always had," Caldwell said Thursday.

Philadelphia police also believe one of Harrison's guns was used in a shooting in his hometown last summer. No charges were filed against Harrison, and the man who made the accusation is now headed to trial for lying to police.

Harrison isn't the only veteran the Colts could lose this week.

Polian said Sunday that he had made an offer to three-time Pro Bowl center Jeff Saturday and Saturday was "mulling it over."

Saturday, however, told The Associated Press later that he has discussed it with his wife and has decided to become a free agent. Players can beginning signing with other teams on Friday.

"I think I made it very clear that I wanted to stay in Indy, that's where my wife and family wanted to stay, and I wanted to retire here," he said. "But I'm moving into free agency because my wife and I decided this is what is best for our family, though I've not completely ruled out playing for the Colts."

Saturday has started 138 games in nine seasons and is responsible for making blocking calls along the line.

Those two, along with Manning and punter Hunter Smith, are the longest-tenured players on the Colts roster. Smith's agent, Thomas Mills, has said Smith also does not expect to be re-signed by the Colts before Friday.

Saturday said he was surprised by the offer and has made his decision.

"After Kelvin (Hayden) was done, Bill called and we met and that's when he came with the offer," Saturday said. "We discussed it"

Saturday would not discuss details of the Colts' offer or characterize the contents.

The problem for Indianapolis is salary cap space.

On Thursday, the Colts signed Hayden, a cornerback, to a new five-year, $43 million deal. That means since 2004, Manning, Harrison, Wayne, Dwight Freeney, Robert Mathis, Ryan Diem, Bob Sanders, Dallas Clark and Ryan Lilja have all signed contracts worth at least $19 million.

Polian does not believe those deals have put Indy in the money pinch; the new salary cap rules have.

Clearly, though, Harrison's six-year $66 million deal, with $22 million in bonuses, signed in December 2004 is now proving too costly and if Harrison doesn't accept a pay cut, he may be looking for work in another city.

"I don't want to characterize the discussions," Polian said of the negotiations with Harrison. "But we are impacted by the salary cap for the first time in 11 years."

Joe Rosario wins SGA February Ace

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In a day of high scores due to the windy condition at the fairways, Joe Rosario won the Saipan Golf Association February Ace Tournament via tiebreak.

Rosario tied January Ace winner Tony Deleon Guerrero after 18 holes as they submitted identical net scores of 76 last Feb. 15 at the Marianas Country Club.

But the former won in the count back system by coming in with a double bogey in the par four hole No. 5 while the latter tripled.

Rosario, who has a 19 handicap, submitted a gross of 95 after coming in with 49 in the first nine holes and 46 after the turn.

The 14-handicapper Deleon Guerrero also scored 49 in the front nine and 41 in the back for a gross 90.

Lone female entry Frances Sablan also prevailed via the tiebreak to place third as she tied SGA vice president Jess Castro after the two carded identical net scores of 78.

Sablan tripled in hole No. 5, while Castro had a double par.

The 26-handicapper Sablan had 55 in the front nine and 49 in the back for a gross of 104, while the nine-handicapper Castro finished with 87 after coming in with 46 and 41.

Castro, however, went on to score the longest drive in the par four hole No. 2, sharing the honors with retired Superior Court presiding judge Ed Manibusan, who did it in the par four hole No. 17.

SGA secretary Larry Guerrero shot the closest to the pin in the par three hole No. 6.

"It was a day for the longest and highest net for a winner because it's always been below 70," said Guerrero, who made a net 86.

Ron Hodges, who came in with a net 85, scored the closest to the pin in the par three hole No. 8, while Manibusan, who finished a net 84, clinched the closest to the pin in hole No. 12 and Martin Sablan in hole No. 16.

In the hunt for birdies, Hodges made three with one each in the second, fifth, and 13th holes, while Jess Castro had it in the ninth and 15th and Manibusan in the 13th and 15th.

Four players had one each, including Larry Guerrero in the 17th, Tony Guerrero in the 12th, Rey San Nicolas in seventh, and Jung Teack, also in the seventh.

Meanwhile, SGA announced that it elected its new set of officers recently. They were Ben Aldan, who replaces Martin Sablan as president, Jess Castro (vice president), Larry Guerrero (secretary), Joe Sablan (treasurer).

Aldan also appointed the five members of the board of directors.

They were Ed Manibusan (chairman of membership and handicap committee), Mariano Fajardo (chairman of tournament and rules committee), Ed Sablan (chairman of community support and public relations), Frank Rosario (member), and Rey San Nicolas (member).

The Ace for the Month Tournament for March will be played at the Kingfishers Golf Links but no definite date has been set yet.

DIAMOND

From Page 28

cutting the lead to five, 72-77, with 1:13 remaining on the clock.

In Diamond's next offensive play, Pando Muleta saved the Auto Fixers from getting caught with a 24-second shot clock violation, when he converted a triple from the right baseline over the outstretched arms of Ol'Aces' Derrick Tudela, with two seconds left on the shot clock.

Muleta's 3-pointer increased Diamond's lead to eight, 80-73, with less than a minute remaining in the game.

Ol'Aces failed to make a bucket in their last three attempts, while Diamond sealed the win from the 15-foot line, canning three charities.

Ol'Aces absorbed their second loss in six matches after missing several key players in Friday's game.

Ol'Aces were without Jack Lizama, Taj Van Buren, Peter Camacho, and Elias Rangamar, but they managed to take the lead in the first quarter, 20-15.

Diamond grabbed the driver's seat at halftime, 39-36, with Muleta and Esdrelon drilling a triple apiece, and Bruce Berline nailing several baskets underneath.

The Auto Fixers padded the lead in the third quarter, as Esdrelon and Muleta continued to hit their outside shots, while Ol'Aces slowed down on offense, making only 13 points in that canto.

Ol'Aces tried to recover in the fourth, but timely baskets from Esdrelon and Muleta prevented them from stealing the win.

Diamond Auto Care 83 – Esdrelon 26, Muleta 17, Berline 14, Talania 8, Peredo 6, Guiab 6, Brostrom 4, Dayrit 2.

Ol'Aces 72 – Pelisamen 29, Renguul 13, Iginoeg 11, White 7, Omar 6, Tudela 4, Olaitiman 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-20, 39-36, 64-49, 83-72.

FREEDOM

From Page 28

but both went perfect at the plate, going 4-for-4.

The Mayor's Office scored its lone run at the bottom of the fourth with second baseman Ernest Kani reaching home plate on a Manny Sablan single.

Customs 16, Hopwood 8

Customs halted its five-game losing skid after a 16-8 triumph over Hopwood.

First baseman J.P. Sablan went 4-for-4 at bat and recorded four RBIs, while catcher Ton Iguel hit 3-for-4 and had four RBIs.

Customs saved its best in the last two innings scoring 11 runs to turn a 5-2 lead to an 16-8 advantage, going into the top of the last inning.

Customs secured its third win in 13 games after Hopwood's first two batters flied out and the third was beaten to second base.

WOMEN'S
CUC 12, DCCA 6

In the lone women's match, Commonwealth Utilities Corp. shut out defending champion Department of Community and Cultural Affairs in the last two innings to eke out a 12-6 win.

CUC was ahead by only two runs, 8-6, after five full innings when it tightened its defense in the last two innings to preserve the victory.

At the bottom of the sixth, DCCA's two batters were beaten to first and second based, while the fourth one flied out.

At the bottom of the seventh, CUC pitcher Dolorina Panuelo struck out lead off batter Erica Tenorio and Panuelo made another defensive stop picking up a grounder and throwing to first base for the second out.

Third batter Janice Camacho gave DCCA a breather when she singled in the ensuing play. But Camacho was left stranded on first when CUC shortstrop Jenny Palacios caught Jenny Teigita's linedrive, ending DCCA's chances to extend the game.

ISLANDERS

From Page 28

Ghasias Brothers pulling off a 108-84 victory over first challenger Okies in double overtime.

When Brothers attempted to defend the bragging rights in "Gorilla Games, Evenflow entered the picture, stunning the league champions with a 109-101 overtime win.

But Evenflow's reign in "Gorilla Games" did not last long, as the Islanders came out smoking with a 17-point juiced-out win early this month.

When "Gorilla Games" resumed Saturday, the Islanders' guns were still blazing.

The Islanders prevailed in the opening set, 25-23, before the Soul Rebels recovered in the second set in similar scores.

In third set, the Islanders pushed all the right buttons en route to a dominating win, 26-4.

Entering the fourth set, the Islanders were ahead, 74-50, putting pressure to Soul Rebels to win the last regular set to send the game into overtime.

The Islanders took an early lead in the fourth set, 10-4, before the Soul Rebels rallied and moved within one, 10-11.

The Soul Rebels kept the Islanders within striking distance in the ensuing plays, before the latter pulled away, limiting the former to four points in the closing phase of the match en route to a 26-15 win.

Former Ghasias Brothers mainstay Freddie Pelisamen suited up for the Islanders in Saturday's game and was the match's heavy hitter, scoring 23 points. He had nine kees, one ace, and one goal.

Fifteen aces and 25 kees were scored in the game.

The Islanders will face a new challenger next month, as "Gorilla Games" allow losing teams to rest for a month before returning to play.

Besides the right to defend its biweekly title, the winning team in "Gorilla Games" takes home $50 cash.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	45	12	.789	–
Philadelphia	27	27	.500	16 1/2
New Jersey	24	32	.429	20 1/2
New York	23	32	.418	21
Toronto	22	36	.379	23 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	41	14	.745	–
Atlanta	32	23	.582	9
Miami	29	26	.527	12
Charlotte	22	34	.393	19 1/2
Washington	13	43	.232	28 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	43	11	.796	–
Detroit	27	27	.500	16
Milwaukee	28	31	.475	17 1/2
Chicago	25	31	.446	19
Indiana	24	34	.414	21

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	37	17	.685	–
Houston	35	21	.625	3
Dallas	33	22	.600	4 1/2
New Orleans	32	22	.593	5
Memphis	15	40	.273	22 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	37	19	.661	–
Portland	35	20	.636	1 1/2
Utah	33	23	.589	4
Minnesota	18	37	.327	18 1/2
Oklahoma City	13	43	.232	24

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	46	10	.821	–
Phoenix	31	24	.564	14 1/2
Golden State	20	36	.357	26
L.A. Clippers	13	43	.232	33
Sacramento	12	45	.211	34 1/2

Yesterday's Games
Indiana 98, Chicago 91
Toronto 111, New York 100
Boston 128, Phoenix 108
Milwaukee 120, Denver 117
Houston 99, Charlotte 78
Orlando 122, Miami 99
Portland 116, L.A. Clippers 87
L.A. Lakers 111, Minnesota 108
Cleveland 99, Detroit 78

NORTHERN TRUST OPEN SCORES

LOS ANGELES (AP) – Scores Sunday from the Northern Trust Open, a $6.3 million US PGA Tour event played at the 7,298-yard, par-71 Riviera Country Club:

FINAL ROUND

Phil Mickelson	63-72-62-72–269
Steve Stricker	68-66-69-67–270
K.J. Choi	66-69-67-69–271
Andres Romero	66-70-65-70–271
Fred Couples	67-70-65-69–271
J.B. Holmes	73-67-64-68–272
Luke Donald	66-69-69-68–272
Mark Calcavecchia	70-69-64-69–272
Rory Sabbatini	68-67-67-70–272
Brendon de Jonge	69-70-67-67–273
Dustin Johnson	66-70-67-70–273
Scott McCarron	64-68-70-71–273
Angel Cabrera	72-68-68-66–274
Rich Beem	68-69-69-68–274
Tim Clark	68-72-66-68–274
Chris DiMarco	68-72-66-68–274
Bubba Watson	69-71-68-68–276
Kenny Perry	70-68-69-69–276
Kevin Sutherland	72-67-68-69–276
Hunter Mahan	69-69-68-70–276
Brian Davis	69-69-68-70–276
Richard S. Johnson	70-68-67-71–276
Robert Allenby	70-67-68-71–276
Dean Wilson	66-72-67-71–276
Kevin Na	67-69-72-69–277
Jeff Quinney	69-71-70-67–277
Jason Bohn	73-66-68-70–277
Tommy Armour III	67-67-72-71–277
Ben Curtis	68-69-69-71–277
Marc Turnesa	69-68-71-70–278
Woody Austin	68-70-69-71–278
Bill Lunde	69-67-71-71–278
Charley Hoffman	68-72-70-68–278
Pat Perez	69-66-75-68–278
D.J. Trahan	67-72-72-67–278
Geoff Ogilvy	68-67-71-72–278
Briny Baird	67-70-68-73–278
Bo Van Pelt	68-71-74-65–278
Jeev M. Singh	69-70-71-69–279
Bob Estes	72-65-73-69–279
Joe Ogilvie	70-70-69-71–280
Jerry Kelly	72-68-69-71–280
Graeme McDowell	70-71-66-73–280
Rocco Mediate	70-68-70-72–280
Jeff Klauk	67-72-68-73–280
Soren Hansen	70-69-72-69–280
John Mallinger	70-68-73-69–280
Jim Furyk	66-71-75-68–280
Brad Adamonis	70-70-72-68–280
Cameron Beckman	70-71-71-68–280
Brandt Jobe	68-72-70-71–281
Kirk Triplett	67-70-73-71–281
Carl Pettersson	68-71-72-70–281
Ernie Els	71-67-73-70–281
Bart Bryant	74-67-71-69–281
Aaron Baddeley	71-70-72-68–281
Chad Campbell	72-68-69-73–282
Matt Kuchar	70-68-75-69–282
David Duval	70-69-71-73–283
Ryuji Imada	67-73-71-72–283
Nick Watney	71-68-73-71–283
Charles Howell III	72-67-75-69–283
Charlie Wi	70-71-74-68–283
John Merrick	66-71-72-75–284
Stuart Appleby	71-68-73-72–284
Michael	70-71-71-72–284
Stephen Ames	71-70-71-72–284
Scott Verplank	71-70-71-72–284
Retief Goosen	68-71-71-75–285
Jimmy Walker	69-70-70-77–286
Ryan Moore	68-71-77-71–287
Mike Weir	70-71-70-77–288
Daniel Chopra	73-67-74-74–288
Jason Gore	69-70-75-75–289

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER CAGING STANDINGS

CNMI Nationals	5	1
Ol'Aces	4	2
IT& E	4	2
Quichocho Law Office	3	3
Docomo	2	3
Diamond Auto Fixers	1	4
Runnin' Rebels	1	5

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	15	0
CPA	10	2
Freedom Air	10	2
Beach Boys	10	3
No Zone	10	4
Docomo	10	4
Joeten Motor Jets	10	4
Legislature	9	5
P&S	6	6
CRM/DEQ	6	7
POI	6	7
DLNR	6	8
CHC	4	8
PSS	4	9
PIC	3	9
Law & Order	3	9
CUC	3	9
Customs	3	10
Mayors	2	12
Hopwood	0	12

Women's Division

NMC	9	2
Finance	5	4
CUC	5	4
DCCA	4	6
CHC	1	8

TSUNAMI

From Page 28

Wong posted 33.03 seconds in the 50m breaststroke swim en route to setting new marks in the boys' 17-18 age group and the open division.

Wong owned the previous age group and open records in the 50m breaststroke event with his 33.18 second swim in a Guam tournament on Dec. 28, 2008.

The Marianas High School student competed in five other events and scored 575 points to finish on top of the field in the boys' 17-18 age group. He defeated teammates Shin Kimura (506 points) and Cooper Graf (495 points).

In the women's division, Tsunami Saipan's Myana Welch took first place with her 395 points, downing Keanna Villagomez (130).

Myana's younger sister, Ashley Welch, ruled the girls' 11-12 age group after gaining 270 points and downing four others swimmers.

Another Tsunami Saipan swimmer, Angel Tan, finished on top of her age group (girls' 9-10) after collecting 410 points in seven events.

2009 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Players and spectators watch the finals match in the men's singles between Jeff Race and Kirk Schuler.

The Top 3 placers in the mixed up doubles division of the 2009 Coconut Classic Tennis Tournament pose for a group photo during the awards ceremony at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Brian Hom returns the ball to Richard Brostrom and Adelle Hudkins during the first round of the mixed up doubles event.

From left, girls' 14-and-under champion Amy Arenovski, runner-up Ilia Corella, and third placer Neghar Rastguiy.

Boys' 10-and-under winners, from left, champion Carl Dela Cruz, runner-up Colin Ramsey, and third placer Kennedy Izuka.

Boys' 14-and-under champion Rafael Jones, left, and runner-up Christian Miller, right, show their "coconut trophy" and are joined by third placer Jake Lee in the awards ceremony.

Top 3 winners in the girls' 18-and-under division, from left, champion Lila Mailman, third placer Theecel Minor, and runner-up Thea Minor are all smiles as they pose for a group photo.

Jean Bracken goes for a two-handed backhand return in her first round match in the girls' 14-and-under singles.

Tournament director and men's singles runner-up Jeff Race is flanked by champion Kirk Schuler, left, and third placer Nicolas Son.

Women's singles champion Lydia Tan, left, and runner-up Kinumi Tanaguchi receive their "coconut trophy."

Mickelson avoids a meltdown to win at Riviera

On the verge of blowing the biggest lead of his career, Phil Mickelson turned his fortunes around in the final hour at Riviera with back-to-back birdies that carried him to a one-shot victory Sunday in the Northern Trust Open. 25

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Bryant, Lakers outlast spirited Wolves

Kobe Bryant scored 28 points to move past Elgin Baylor into 20th place on the NBA's career scoring list as the Los Angeles Lakers outlasted the Minnesota Timberwolves for a 111-108 victory Sunday. 24

Tsunami Saipan swimmers set 7 records

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan set seven records in the Saipan Swim Club-hosted Heptathlon Swim Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

Kai Staal led Tsunami Saipan's record-breaking swims in the two-day meet held on Feb. 6 and 7, as the 14-year-old swimmer shattered three age group (boys' 13-14) marks.

Staal recorded 56.83 seconds in the 100m freestyle swim, shattering his own mark of 57.36 seconds posted on Jan. 9, 2009 at the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Championships in Guam.

In the 400m freestyle swim, Staal also eclipsed his own record (4:34.13) clocking in at 4:33.99. His previous mark in the 400m freestyle event was recorded on Dec. 28, 2008 during a meet in Guam.

Staal's third record swim was in the 100m breaststroke, as he timed in at 1:15.77. Again, the Saipan International School student crushed his won record (1:16.17) made in a tournament in Guam in December last year.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan's Kai Staal in a record-breaking swim in the 100m freestyle event in the 2009 SSC Annual Heptathlon Swim Meet held on Feb. 7 at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

Tsunami SAIPAN

With Staal's three age-group marks, he ruled the boys' 13-14 age group competition, earning 625 points against Lester Lapuz's 370 points. Staal swam in four other events, namely the 100m backstroke, 50m butterfly, 50m freestyle, and 50m breaststroke.

Tsunami Saipan's four other marks were courtesy of Kensuke Kimura and Rezne Wong.

Kimura timed in at 4:52.68 in the 400m freestyle event to break the boys' 11-12 age group record of 4:54.33, which he himself set on Nov. 22, 2008

In the 200m backstroke swim, Kimura smashed the seven-year record of Juan Camacho after clocking in at 2:40.79. Camacho held the previous record of 2:48.56, which was set on March 21, 2002.

With two records in his belt, Kensuke topped the boys' 11-12 rankings in the SSC meet, collecting 500 points. He beat teammate Kaisei Toda (385 points) and SSC's Andrew Kimball (280 points).

See TSUNAMI on Page 26

Diamond Auto notches first win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

BANMI Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands

Diamond Auto Care withstood Ol'Aces' fourth quarter rally to nail an 83-72 win in the 2008-2009 BANMI/Budweiser Basketball League Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Elmer Esdrelon's consecutive baskets helped the Auto Fixers foil Ol'Aces' comeback bid in the payoff period, giving Diamond its first win in five games.

Down by 15 at the end of the third period, 49-64, Freddie Pelisamen sparked an Ol'Aces 12-2 scoring run in the fourth period. He completed a 3-point play to move Ol'Aces within four, 62-66, with less than five minutes left in the game.

But Esdrelon widened the gap with his back-to-back triples and a fastbreak jumper, 74-62, going into the last three minutes of the fourth period.

Ol'Aces refused to give up with Pelisamen and Romeo Iginoef scoring in spurts and threatened Diamond anew. The duo led Ol'Aces' 10-3 salvo,

See DIAMOND on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Diamond Auto Care's Junar Guiab tries to elude the defense of Ol'Aces' Gabriel White during their game in the Budweiser caging Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Freedom Air zooms to 10th win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Budweiser Softball League

Freedom Air took a short route to gaining its 10th win in the men's division of the 2008 Inter-Government/Business Slow-pitch Softball League after crushing the Saipan Mayor's Office in four innings, 22-1, Friday night at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

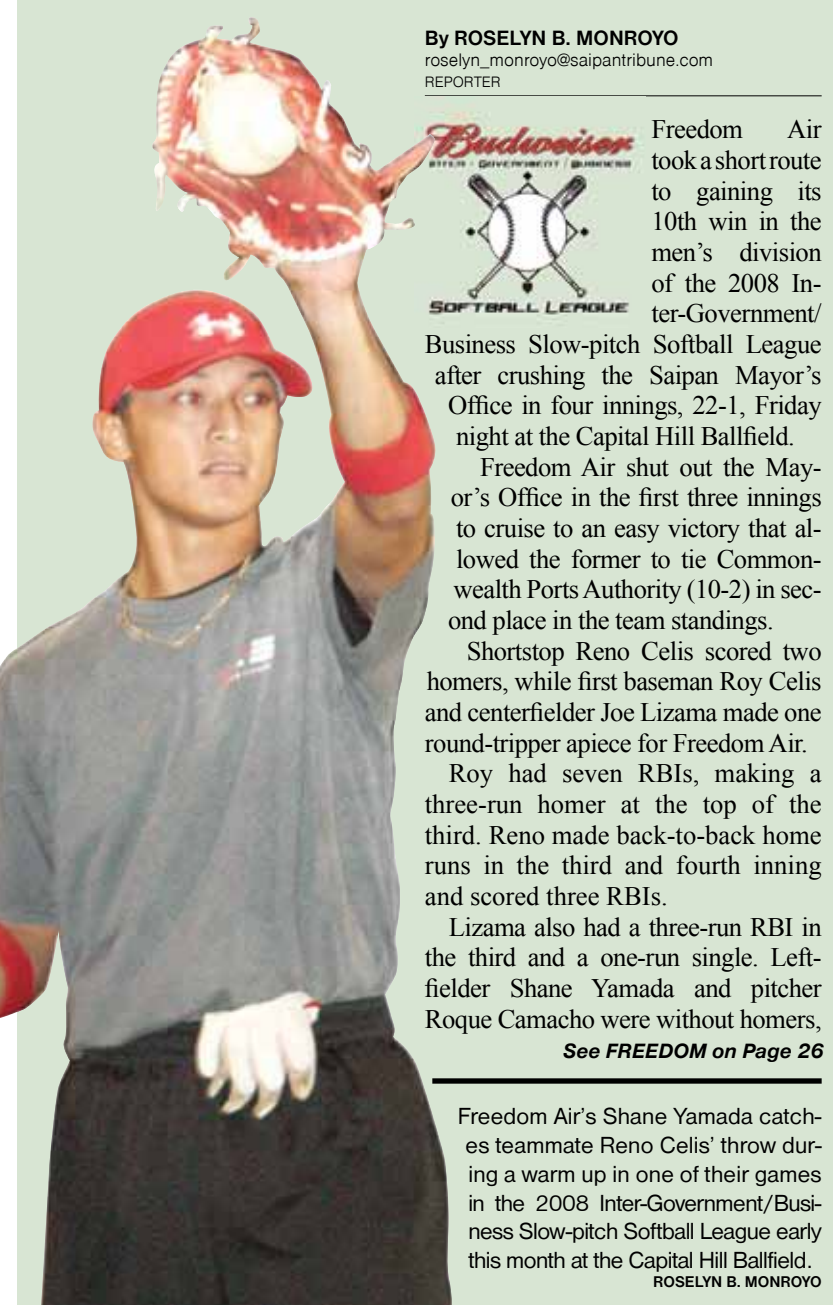
Freedom Air shut out the Mayor's Office in the first three innings to cruise to an easy victory that allowed the former to tie Commonwealth Ports Authority (10-2) in second place in the team standings.

Shortstop Reno Celis scored two homers, while first baseman Roy Celis and centerfielder Joe Lizama made one round-tripper apiece for Freedom Air.

Roy had seven RBIs, making a three-run homer at the top of the third. Reno made back-to-back home runs in the third and fourth inning and scored three RBIs.

Lizama also had a three-run RBI in the third and a one-run single. Leftfielder Shane Yamada and pitcher Roque Camacho were without homers,

See FREEDOM on Page 26



Freedom Air's Shane Yamada catches teammate Reno Celis' throw during a warm up in one of their games in the 2008 Inter-Government/Business Slow-pitch Softball League early this month at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Islanders juice out Soul Rebels

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

ROCBALL

The Islanders became the first team to win two in a row in "Gorilla Games" in the World Organized Rocball Community League after crushing the Soul Rebels in four sets, 100-65, Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Islanders notched their first win in "Gorilla Games, two weeks ago, dislodging Jan. 25 winner Evenflow from the top with a 98-91 juiced out win.

"Gorilla Games" started the first week of January with 2008-2009 Rocball league champion

See ISLANDERS on Page 26